

THE USE OF THE PRETERITE AND THE PRESENT PERFECT IN ENGLISH AND GERMAN. A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS.

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This master thesis deals with the use of the present perfect and the preterite in both English and German. The aim of the investigation is to find out to what extent the use of the present perfect and the preterite vary in English and German and how the original forms are translated into the other language, i.e. whether specific translation patterns can be found.

To begin with, a theoretical part summarizes earlier researches by various authors before the main part of the thesis is presented. The research part is a corpus-based analysis, using the Oslo Multilingual Corpus. First of all, the English original preterite forms are looked upon. Three semantic categories could be found in my investigation in which the preterite is used in English: single events, sequences and events occurring regularly. Additionally, the preterite is often used in combination with definite time adverbials. The same categories could also be found when considering the German preterite.

Looking at the English translations of the German preterite forms, it is striking that most instances, in total over 90%, were translated into the preterite in English as well. Considering the German translations of the English preterite forms, the preterite is also the preferred tense used in the translations, however, the present perfect appears also frequently in the translations, especially in sentences containing direct speech.

In most of the cases, the present perfect is used in English when referring to events or states that have an impact on the present point of time. In the German originals, the present perfect is used in the same way. However, in addition there are a high number of cases where the present perfect refers to an event located in the past. Furthermore, the present perfect is used in German in combination with definite time adverbials, such as *gestern*, which would not be possible in English, but the preterite would have to be used instead.

An interesting finding could be made when regarding the English translations of the German present perfect forms. The majority of the hits were translated into a different verb form than the original one, namely the preterite. However, in the German translation of the English originals the preterite was the favored verb form.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and research question

Both English and German have two different ways of referring to past time events: the preterite and the present perfect. The distinction between them is often assumed to be very difficult and leads to mistakes in the respective languages. This is an important aspect for both learners and translators of the two languages. The fact that both languages seem to be similar in this regard, i.e. that both have two main means of how to expressing situations in the past, makes this a good starting point for a research on the use of the tenses in English and German.

On the one hand, I will have a look at the preterite in both English and German, such as in:

1. Girls, he **thought**, did not, could not, suffer so much.
(AB1)¹
2. In Fällen, wo Verpaarung zwei Fisch-Seelen zu einer einzigen verbunden hatte, **blieb** ein Paar übrig, wie vom braunen und vom weiß-gelben Schmetterlingsfisch.
(KOL1)
In cases where, as a result of pairing, two fishes behaved as one, one pair remained, as in the brown, and the white-and-gold butterfly-fish.
(KOL1TE)

On the other hand, the present perfect in both English and German will be focused upon:

3. We **'ve discussed** it confidentially and Lilian approves."
(AH1)
4. Wir gedenken aller Völker, die im Krieg **gelitten haben**, vor allem der unsäglich vielen Bürger der Sowjetunion und der Polen, die ihr Leben verloren haben.
(RVW1)
We remember all nations who suffered in the war, especially the countless citizens of the Soviet Union and Poland who lost their lives.
(RVW1TE)

¹ The codes shown here and throughout the rest of the research paper are taken directly from the OMC. They indicate where the sentence can be found in the corpus.

In order to examine in which cases the forms are used, I will use material taken from the Oslo Multilingual Corpus, which has a part including both German and English original texts and also their English and German translations. That is why I will also present how the preterite and the present perfect verb forms in the English and German original texts are translated into German and English, as in:

5. Yvette herself was never to perceive this, for the evidence of her splendour **was** always there for her to admire.

[\(AB1\)](#)

Yvette selbst sollte das nie bemerken, denn sie **konnte** den Beweis ihrer Schönheit ja immer bestaunen.

[\(AB1TD\)](#)

6. Diese Regel ist so sonderbar, daß bisher noch niemand daran **gedacht hat**, sie anzuwenden.

[\(HME3\)](#)

This provision is so odd that no one, so far, **has thought** of implementing it.

[\(HME3TE\)](#)

To begin with, I will present some background information in Chapter 2. Here I will refer to and discuss various authors and their previous research on the use of the preterite and the present perfect in both German and English and their conclusions. Moving on, in Chapter 3 I will explain why I chose to use corpora in order to carry out my research and I will give some general information on the Oslo Multilingual Corpus and especially the En-Ge-No part used in this paper.

Chapters 4 and 5 can be said to be the main parts of my paper, which present the corpora research results. In 4.1 I will have a look at the original English texts and see when the preterite forms are used in the hits taken from the OMC. In 4.2 I will then present the German translations of the English originals before examining the German original preterite forms in 4.3. In the last part of Chapter 4, in 4.4, the English translations of the German preterite forms will be focused upon. The present perfect will be examined in Chapter 5. To begin with, I will show in 5.1 in which cases the present perfect is used in my corpus material in the English originals, before looking at the German translations of the English present perfect in 5.2. In 5.3 I will present the German original present perfect verb forms and

finally, in 5.4 the English translations will be focused upon. In all chapters, the statements by various authors presented in Chapter 2 will be compared with the results found in my own research.

Chapter 6 serves as a conclusion for all the findings in my corpus material, including important aspects regarding the way the samples were collected that have to be kept in mind when reading my results and I will also suggest possible further work.

The main research questions in this paper deal with the issue in which cases the preterite and the present perfect are used in both English and German and whether significant differences in the use of the respective verb forms can be found. Additionally, the question arises to what extent other verb forms are used in the translations and whether specific patterns can be found here.

Chapter 2: Background information on the use of verb forms referring to past time situations in English and German

To begin with, I am going to have a look at how speakers of the English and German languages can refer to past time events and states. Earlier researches by various authors and grammar books will be taken into consideration. In 2.1 the German tenses will be examined before introducing the use of the tenses in English in 2.2.

2.1 German tenses

The German language has two competing variants of referring to past time events. The German preterite, the so-called Präteritum, and the perfect, the Präsensperfekt. The preterite will be discussed in 2.1.1 and the German perfect in 2.1.2. Additionally, I will compare them directly in 2.1.3 before highlighting the particular use of the two tenses in the Southern German dialect in 2.1.4.

2.1.1 The German preterite

The preterite can be described as the synthetic form and the present perfect as the periphrastic one (Elsness, 2009a: 228). In order to describe and understand the preterite fully, it has to be compared directly to the perfect. However, I will start by mentioning general aspects of when the preterite is used in German before going over to examining it with regard to the perfect. Generally, the preterite is used for single or repeated events in the past that are very often specified by time adverbs (Fabricius-Hansen, 2009: 511). These events that are clearly located in the past do not have a special relevance to the present (d'Alquen, 1997: 143).

The preterite is used for past time events and this becomes clear when comparing the following two sentences:

7. Das Wetter ist schön. ("The weather is nice")

8. Das Wetter war schön. ("The weather was nice")

When seeing preterite sentences in contrast to the present tense (d'Alquen, 1997: 144), as shown here in the two examples, the first sentence including the present tense and the second one including the preterite, it becomes obvious that

example 7 expresses that the weather is nice at the moment of speaking or writing and 8 expresses that the weather was nice before, not at the point of speaking or writing though.

D'Alquen states that the concept of spread, i.e. whether the tense regarded has an influence on the past, present and/or future, necessarily has to be taken into consideration when talking about the preterite "because without it, the whole event-period could be understood as referred to by the tense. This period is so varied that the tense would seem to be inconsistent in its time reference" (1997: 145). The spread for the preterite starts in the past, continues in the present and can even spread into the future (d'Alquen, 1997: 145). There are two different possibilities when talking about the preterite. On the one hand, events can have no spread, i.e. they remain within the past time range and are completed in that time period (d'Alquen, 1997: 145), such as:

9. Shakespeare veröffentlichte Romeo und Julia 1597 ("Shakespeare published Romeo and Juliet in 1597")
10. Die Römer bauten Handelsstrassen in allen Provinzen ("The Romans built trade roads in all provinces")

In both examples, the events took place in the past and did not extent to the present time. On the other hand, d'Alquen (1997: 145) talks about forward spread, i.e. the events continues into the present and often also into the future time. An example for forward spread could be:

11. Das Buch war sehr interessant ("The book was very interesting")
12. Gestern stand ein Bericht über Mexico in der Zeitung ("Yesterday there was an article about Mexico in the newspaper")

In the first sentence, the fact stated is still valid in the present and will also be valid in the future. The article focused upon in the second example still exists in the present and will do so in the future as well, even though *Gestern* indicates the past time character of this sentence.

There are also instances where the preterite in German seems to be used illogically. Markus (1977: 49) talks about a metaphorical use of tense here, while

d'Alquen (1997: 146) states that we can find a shift of temporal focus in these cases. Common examples (Markus, 1977: 49) in order to explain this phenomenon are:

13. Was gab es morgen im Theater? ("What was on at the theater tomorrow?")

14. Wer bekam das Bier? ("Who got the beer?")

In both sentences the use of the preterite seems controversial. The adverb *morgen* indicates future reference and in the second examples, the waitress asks, with the beer still in her hands thus indicating present tense, who gets it (Markus, 1977: 49). In order to explain it, Markus cites Wunderlich who says that the sentences have to be revised in order to understand why the preterite is used (1977: 49). Thus, the second sentence could be *Wer wollte, dass er ein Bier bekommt* ("Who wanted that he gets a beer?"), thus the question of the waitress refers back to the original order of the guest *Ich bekomme ein Bier* ("I want to have a beer") (Markus, 1977: 49). The first sentence that deals with what is on at the theater concentrates on the speaker's "memory that he recently knew this information, and at the time there was to be offered the item he has since forgotten" (d'Alquen, 1997: 146). So the fact that he knew some time ago what was on at the theater is in focus and not what actually is on the day after.

In writing, the preterite can be described as the main form used for chronological stories (Fabricius-Hansen, 2009: 513). In this context, inner monologue and stream of consciousness are of great importance because we normally find the preterite in German here according to Markus (1977: 49). An inner monologue can be described as direct speech conveying thoughts, where the narrator tells the reader what is going on in his or her mind as a first-person narrator, i.e. including personal pronouns (Martinez and Scheffel, 2007: 60). However, the thoughts are not uttered, but only presented in the same way as spoken discourse is expressed.

2.1.2 The German perfect

The German perfect is constructed by using an auxiliary and a past participle (Rothstein, 2008: 23). In German, there are two auxiliaries that can be used in these cases: *sein* ("to be") and *haben* ("to have"). Fabricius-Hansen (2009) states

in the German grammar book *Duden*, that in comparison with the preterite, the present perfect always establishes a connection to the present. On the one hand, the present is an orientation point, i.e. at that time the event is complete (Fabricius-Hansen, 2009: 507), and on the other hand, the event in the past might still have some impact on the present (Fabricius-Hansen, 2009: 508). When the clause expresses that the event happened before the point of speaking, the perfect has to be used (Fabricius-Hansen, 2009: 513). However, nowadays native German speakers are often not aware of the differences between the preterite and the present perfect (Rothstein, 2008: 24). In a lot of regions, the perfect has taken completely over and has replaced the preterite (Rothstein, 2008: 24). I will get back to that development in more detail in 2.1.4.

D'Alquen states that there is no forward spread in the German perfect (1997: 177). This has to do with the completion that is involved in the perfect (d'Alquen, 1997: 177). Thus, the event that is being talked or written about is already completed at the point of speaking or writing and therefore, it cannot spread into present or future tense. This view is similar to Reichenbach's approach to the English perfect. Reichenbach distinguishes between a speech time, a reference time and the time when the actual event happened (Rothstein, 2008: 31). He states that the event itself takes place before the reference time and the speech time (Rothstein, 2008: 31). Reichenbach's theory will be commented on in more detail in 2.2.2 when looking at the English perfect.

These views, which Rothstein summarizes as "Anteriority-approaches" (2008: 31), make it difficult to account for events that have an impact on the present or a durative aspect. This is especially true when considering examples involving the adverbial *since*. In these cases, the present perfect expresses a durative aspect which delivers a time interval, rather than one precise point of time in the past (Rothstein, 2008: 31-32). Thus, Rothstein also includes the so-called "ExtendedNow" theories in his work (2008: 32). He states that the "ExtendedNow" interval is a time span whose right boundary ends, in the case of the present perfect, at the moment of speech. The position of its left boundary is not specified or can be given by adverbials like *since* (Rothstein, 2008: 32). So we get a time span rather than a single event that happened in the past and is

completed by the point of speaking. However, this approach cannot entirely be used for explaining the German perfect since it does not capture its whole meaning (Rothstein, 2008: 35). German can also use the present perfect in order to express future reference (Rothstein, 2008: 35), such as in:

15. Morgen bin ich bereits nach London gefahren ("I will have travelled to London by tomorrow")

Therefore, the "perfect time span" has been introduced in order to account for events that are located after the point of speech (Rothstein, 2008: 35). The left boundary of the time span remains the same, i.e. it is either not expressed explicitly or made clear by using the adverbial *since*. The right boundary, however, has to be adjusted. It has to be the reference time, in the example mentioned above "tomorrow", rather than the point of time when the sentence was uttered (Rothstein, 2008: 35). Rothstein concludes by saying that "the German present perfect introduces a dynamic time interval (PTS) whose right boundary can reach up to the reference time set by the auxiliary" (2008: 40).

2.1.3 Direct comparison preterite and perfect

When comparing the preterite and the present perfect directly, you can say that they are often interchangeable when involving time adverbials (Fabricius-Hansen, 2009: 513). Rothstein (2008: 74) states that definite time adverbials can be used in combination with the present perfect in his book "The Perfect Time Span" that examines the German, English and Swedish perfect. When looking at the use of adverbials, he concludes that neither the English nor the Swedish present perfect can be combined with adverbials that denote a definite position on the time axis (Rothstein, 2008: 74). Since Rothstein is of the opinion that German has a perfect time span, as seen in 2.1.2, this span is flexible as in:

16. Gestern ist er nach London gekommen ("Yesterday, he came to London")

Here, it is no problem that we find a time adverbial denoting a specific time in the past and the present perfect together in one sentence (Rothstein, 2008: 76). Thus, German can also use the present perfect in sentences that include definite time adverbials. At the same time, we can also find specific time adverbials in combination with the preterite. Fabricius-Hansen states that sentences

containing the preterite often need a temporal adverbial in addition to the tense itself in order to make the reader understand why that tense was chosen (2009: 498). Concluding, we can say that it has been shown that both the preterite and the present perfect can be used combined with time adverbials denoting a specific point of time.

As mentioned earlier, in writing the preterite can be described as the main form used for chronological stories (Fabricius-Hansen, 2009: 513). Especially in newspaper articles though, the present perfect can often be found in the first and last sentence of the article, thus building a framework for the writing itself (Fabricius-Hansen, 2009: 513).

Looking at German everyday speech, the perfect is used in the majority of cases (Fabricius-Hansen, 2009: 514). Hennig conducted a research in order to figure out how often the preterite and the perfect tense are used in talk shows, which can definitely be described as a program where the spoken language prevails (2000: 180). In her results, she included a total of 379 verbs (2000: 18). Out of these, almost 94% were used in the present perfect, while only 19% were used in the preterite (Hennig, 2000: 180). Looking at the instances of verbs that only occurred with one of the tenses, Hennig's results show that 81% of the verbs only could be found appearing as the present perfect and 6% only with the preterite (2000: 180).

As mentioned above, most German native speakers are often not able to tell the difference between the perfect and the preterite (Hennig, 2000: 29). In order to show that this is correct, Hennig made an elicitation test with a total of 182 native German speakers. They were given the original version of Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* and a revised version where the perfect and the past forms of the verbs were changed (Hennig, 2000: 30): The original version was:

17. Handwerker trugen ihn. Kein Geistlicher hat ihn begleitet.

Compared to the revised version:

18. Handwerker haben ihn getragen. Kein Geistlicher begleitete ihn.

In her conclusion, Hennig states that although 142 were able to tell what the original version was, half of the participants stated that both versions are interchangeable and 119 stated that they cannot see a difference between the two versions (2000: 30).

Towards the end of her thesis, Hennig comes to the conclusion that on the one hand, there are verbs that tend to occur with the perfect and on the other hand, others can more often be found in sentences including the preterite. The first part of her research is constricted to the spoken language, since she looked at the use of verbs in talk shows (Hennig, 2000: 179). She states that *dürfen* ("be allowed to"), *geben* ("give"), *haben* ("have"), *können* ("can"), *kommen* ("come"), *müssen* ("have to, must"), *sein* ("be"), *stehen* ("stand"), *wissen* ("know") and *wollen* ("want") have a tendency to occur in the preterite (Hennig, 2000: 181). That means that she found in her research that mainly modal verbs appear in the preterite forms and additionally the verbs *geben*, *kommen*, *stehen* and *wissen* (Hennig, 2000: 181). Looking at the verbs that have a tendency to be used in the present perfect, Hennig's research showed the following results: *bekommen* ("receive", "get"), *fahren* ("drive"), *heiraten* ("marry"), *machen* ("make"), *merken* ("notice", "realize"), *sagen* ("say"), *sehen* ("see") and *versuchen* ("try") (2000: 183). However, this list cannot be seen as interesting as the list containing preterite verbs because almost all verbs can occur in the present perfect (Hennig, 2000: 183). Hennig also looked at private letters and her results show that *haben* ("have"), *können* ("can"), *kommen* ("come"), *müssen* ("have to", "must"), *sein* ("be") and *wollen* ("want") often are used in the preterite (Hennig, 2000: 185). Again, most of the verbs represent modal ones and thus, it seems that these verbs favor the use of the preterite.

2.1.4 The Southern German perfect

Especially in Southern Germany, the perfect form of the verb is the one that is used predominantly in order to refer to past time events (Fabricius-Hansen, 2009: 514). In Southern German, the perfect became the general form used for past time events already in the 14th to 16th centuries (d'Alquen, 1997: 176). This development has been brought about by the weakening and loss of unstressed vowels (d'Alquen, 1997: 191). That is why *sagte*, *sagtest* and *sagtet* fell together

with *sagt* and *sagst*, i.e. losing the preterite forms completely (d'Alquen, 1997: 191). D'Alquen states that "preterite functions were taken over in the spoken language by the perfect and for narrative to some extent by the present" (1997: 191). Thus, the differentiations between the two forms are not an easy task and especially in spoken language, the boundaries are fuzzy. D'Alquen states that "the interaction between the preterite and the perfect is [...] the conflict of two systems" (1997: 177). Thus, the system can actually either be examined by looking at the system of Northern Germany or of Southern Germany (d'Alquen, 1997: 177).

However, since it was the Southern German pronunciation that brought about that change, it is still true that the perfect is used a lot more often in speech than in writing (d'Alquen, 1997: 193). In Gersbach's *Die Vergangenheitstempora in oberdeutscher gesprochener Sprache*, it is mentioned additionally that the fact that the preterite was not necessary for everyday or colloquial speech has supported the development from a system that includes two past tenses to the one tense system that we can find nowadays (1982: 51). Finally, Elsness (2009a: 229) states that there is a "more general tendency for synthetic forms to be replaced by periphrastic constructions".

In this context, Markus (1977: 80) raises the question how people from Southern Germany can distinguish between the uses of two tenses, when they only use one of them. He cites Weinrich's research who found two characteristics that are of importance in this context (1977: 80). First of all, the perfect is not used very often in narrations, but the historical present tense is preferred in these cases (Markus, 1977: 80). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, also d'Alquen states that the present tense took to some extent the function of the preterite in narrations (1997: 191). Secondly, the Southern German dialects often use time adverbials indicating sequence, which make it easy to understand for the hearer in which order the events occurred (Markus, 1977: 80). However, Markus does not share Weinrich's view because it is a fact that not only the present tense, but also the present perfect is used in narrations (1977: 80). He concludes that it is not necessary to look for ways how Southern German dialects compensate for the fact that they do only have one way of referring to past time events (Markus, 1977:

81). The present perfect is the “normal” tense used in order to express past time events and the functional opposition to the preterite does simply not exist (Markus, 1977: 81).

Gersbach conducted a research, including spoken material from the regions Baden-Württemberg, Bayern and Vorarlberg and a second corpus, representing the speakers of the Schwarzwald region, i.e. all are examples for the Southern German variety (1982: 61). In his findings, the preterite is used totally in more than 92% of the cases when involving the verb *sein* (“to be”) (Gersbach, 1982: 84). However, when looking at all the other verbs, they are used more in the perfect tense in more than 88% of all corpora material (Gersbach, 1982: 105). Thus, the preterite is only used in about 10% of all verb forms referring to the past tense. Also Fabricius-Hansen (2009: 514) states that the verb *sein* is more or less the only one that can be found in simple past tense forms in Southern Germany.

2.2 The English tenses

Like in German, English also has two constructions that can be used to refer to past time events – the simple past tense and the present perfect. The preterite will be presented in 2.2.1 and the use of the English perfect in 2.2.2. Finally, I am going to have a look at the differences in tense use in some varieties of English, i.e. American, British, Australian and New Zealand English, in 2.2.3.

2.2.1 The English preterite

The past tense is the synthetic one of both options of referring to past time events or states (Biber et. al., 1999: 453). Generally it is used when referring to something that happened in the past and thus, it is completed by the time of speaking or writing (Greenbaum, 1996: 254). Hasselgård et.al. (2007: 185) state that the past tense is used when the event itself is disconnected from the present and it “removes the action from the moment of speaking”. Leech (2004: 13) is of the same opinion and mentions that one element of the preterite meaning is “the happening takes place before the present moment”.

The *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* describes the preterite in the following way: “Past tense most commonly refers to past time via some past

point of reference, especially in fictional narrative and description, where the use of the past tense to describe imaginary past happenings is a well-established convention” (Biber et. al., 1999: 454). The corpus findings that serve as a basis for this grammar show that there is a preference for using the past tense in fiction, rather than the present tense (Biber, et. al., 1999: 456). In news reports, both the present and the past tense can be found, while the preterite cannot be expected to occur extremely often in conversation or academic prose (Biber, et. al., 1999: 456).

Very often, specific time adverbials referring to past time events can be found in these sentences (Greenbaum, 1996: 271). *A week ago, yesterday morning* or *last Monday* are examples for these time adverbials (Leech, 2004: 45). Thus, “the speaker has a definite time in mind” (Leech, 2004: 13). The most common adverbial used in combination with the past tense is *then*, which marks a progression of the events in the past (Biber, et. al., 1999: 467). Also adverbs that delimit a period or duration in the past, such as *during* or *throughout*, often accompany a past tense form (Biber, et. al., 1999: 467). However, there are also vague past time expressions that very often can be found in combination with the preterite. Elsness (2000: 10) had a contrastive look at the use of the preterite and the present perfect in English and Norwegian. He states that the preterite is used in English (2000: 10) in sentences like:

19. Did you sleep well?

Even though the temporal adverb is not expressed explicitly, the underlying meaning of the sentence clearly refers to last night (Elsness, 2000: 10). When being uttered, the night itself is normally over. Thus, the whole event is located in the past and that is why the preterite is used here (Elsness, 2000: 10). Elsness (1997: 7) also explains that the meaning of the preterite can be described as twofold. On the one hand, it locates an event in the past and on the other hand, the preterite also locates it at a particular time in the past (Elsness, 1997: 7). The speaker or writer normally has a particular time in the past in mind and expects the hearer or reader to be able to figure out what time the speaker or writer is referring to (Elsness, 1997: 7). The easiest way of indicating the exact point of

time is by using time adverbials, however, it is not necessarily the most common one (Elsness, 1997: 7). Very often, the linguistic or even situational, i.e. the extra-linguistic, context is essential in order to determine the particular point in the past that is being talked about (Elsness, 1997: 7).

2.2.2 The English perfect

The present perfect is formed by the present tense of the verb *have* plus the past participle, thus it is the periphrastic form of the past tenses (Greenbaum, 1996: 270). The present perfect is used to describe past events or situations that have a current relevance or some kind of relation to the present point of time. Rothstein states that it does not have a futurate use as e.g. the German present perfect (2008: 29). This will be looked upon more closely in the research part of my paper since e.g. Leech (2004: 36 ff.) states that events or states expressed by the present perfect may also continue after the present moment.

The *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* describes the perfect aspect as designating “events or states taking place during a period leading up to the specified time” (Biber, et. al., 1999: 460). Generally, the present perfect establishes a connection between the happening in the past and the moment of speaking or writing (Hasselgård et.al., 2007: 184). Thus, it “refers to a state that began before the present time of speaking or writing and continues until that time, perhaps including it” (Greenbaum, 1996: 270). Elsness (1997: 9) states that the present perfect can be seen as filling a gap between anchored past time situations that are expressed by using the preterite and present/future events. Thus, the main difference between the past tense and the present perfect is the fact that “the present perfect describes a situation that continues to exist up to the present time, while the past tense describes a situation that no longer exists or an event that took place at a particular time in the past” (Biber et. al., 1999: 467).

In this context, the expression “reference time” is mentioned very often. Reichenbach was the first to develop a temporal system that analyses all tenses as relations of three points in time (Rothstein, 2008: 5). Even though his notions can be seen as general indications for all languages, it mainly covers the English tenses (Elsness, 1997: 55). Reichenbach distinguishes between an event, a speech time, and a reference time (Rothstein, 2008: 5). The event is the point of time

when the event itself takes place, the speech time describes when the utterance is made and the reference time is "the point in time relative to which (E) is located" (Rothstein, 2008: 5). The variables event and speech seem to be straightforward, however, it is more difficult to interpret and determine the reference time, especially because Reichenbach himself does not give a clear-cut definition (Rothstein, 2008: 6). Elsness (1997: 55) states that the reference point can be seen as "the point of time from which the event is seen or described". Furthermore, the point of reference will often be made clear by using a time adverbial (Elsness, 1997: 55), such as *yesterday* in:

20. I saw John yesterday.

Here, *yesterday* denotes not only the reference point, but also the point of time when the event occurred (Elsness, 1997: 55). Looking at the present perfect, the event point precedes the point of reference, which is the same as the point of speech when involving the present perfect (Elsness, 1997: 55). In this context, both Elsness (2000) and Rothstein (2008) cite Klein's approaches to this matter, since Reichenbach's approach is an early attempt to describe the distinction between the past tense and the perfect and thus, some detail is missing (Elsness, 2000: 5). Klein (1992) distinguishes between a "topic time", a "situation time" and a "time of utterance". The situation time corresponds to the event time introduced by Reichenbach and the time of utterance can be said to be the same as the speech time (Rothstein, 2008: 7). Elsness (2000: 5) indicates that sentences like the following one cannot be analyzed by using Reichenbach's terms only:

21. The door was open. It **was** wooden.

Even though the door might still be wooden in the present time as well, the verb has to be a preterite form. This can be explained by looking at the topic time, which is defined to be "the time span to which the claim made on a given occasion is constrained" (Klein, 1992: 535).

In newspaper articles, the present perfect is used frequently, since they very often describe events that have just happened (Greenbaum, 1996: 271). This statement is also supported by Elsness' study from 2009. He had a look at the development

of the use of the present perfect in various text categories throughout the last 500 years. There was one text category that showed an increase of the present perfect between 1750 and 1800 and today and that was newspapers (Elsness, 2009a: 234). Even though the increase was not statistically significant (Elsness, 2009a: 234) it does not come as a surprise. With the modern telecommunication technologies developing, news reporting has changed essentially since the 18th century (Elsness, 2009a: 234). Before, news was published when being clearly located in the past. Nowadays, however, it is possible to report events right after they happened, e.g. via the internet. Elsness states that even printed news is located in the recent past when being published (2009a: 235). Biber et. al. conclude in their grammar that verb forms that are not marked for aspect are most common in all registers (1999: 461). However, they also come to the same conclusion as mentioned earlier that the large majority of perfect verb forms can be found in news reportage, academic prose and conversation (Biber, et. al., 1999: 463).

Very often, time adverbials denoting a longer period of time, such as *since 1992* or *the last few months*, can be found in texts in combination with the present perfect (Greenbaum, 1996: 270). Additionally, adverbs like *yet* or *already*, which clearly indicate present time reference, are used with the present perfect (Hasselgård et.al., 2007: 185). However, in English, it is not possible to use specific time adverbs, such as *yesterday* or *one month ago*, in combination with the present perfect (Rothstein, 2008: 29). The adverbs found in present perfect sentences rarely indicate an ending time (Biber et. al., 1999: 468). An exception here is *now*, which is “used to mark a contrast between the present situation and one obtaining in the past” (Biber, et. al., 1999: 468). Elsness (1997:27) points out that one of the main differences between the use of the preterite and the present perfect in English is definite versus indefinite time. Elsness (2009a: 228) states that in comparison to e.g. German or French “English puts severe restrictions on the combination of the present perfect with specifications of a clearly defined temporal location wholly in the past”. Thus, sentences like **He has lived there last month* are not grammatically correct in English. However, as we will see later in

2.2.3, there are differences when it comes to that issue in the various varieties of English.

2.2.3 Variations among the English varieties

When looking at the preterite/present perfect distinction, you have to keep in mind that in the varieties of the English language, differences in use of the preterite and present perfect can be observed. To begin with, British English uses the present perfect more often in total than American English. Hundt, Hay and Gordon (2004: 567) state that this development has to do with the fact that the present perfect was not grammaticalized in British English when the first settlers arrived in America: “Its scarcity in AmE has therefore been interpreted as an aspect of colonial lag” (Hundt, Hay and Gordon, 2004: 567).

To begin with, American English often uses the preterite in cases where it would not be possible in e.g. British English. This applies especially to spoken American English (Tottie, 2007: 161). There is a tendency in American English to use the past tense in sentences including adverbs like *ever*, *never*, *already*, *just* or *yet* (Tottie, 2007: 161). In spoken American English, sentences like example 22 or 23 can be found more and more often:

22. Did the milkman come yet? – Yes, I just saw him.

23. Would you like some dinner? – No thanks, I already had some.

Tottie states that this tendency is stronger when involving the adverb *already* than in sentences containing *yet* (Tottie, 2007: 161). Elsness (2009a) carried out an elicitation test regarding the use of the preterite and present perfect in both British and American English (Elsness, 2009a: 236). Both American and British native speakers were asked to participate. In the elicitation test, he also had sentences including the adverbs *yet* and *already* (Elsness, 2009a: 238). The results show that American speakers accepted the use of the preterite in these cases, while British native speakers regarded it as wrong (Elsness, 2009a: 238). Furthermore, Elsness (2009a: 228) states that although the basic rules are the same in both American and British English, American native speakers have a tendency to use the preterite in sentences including non-specific time adverbs,

such as *recently*, even though British people would choose the present perfect. The fact that the time adverb does not give a definite time in the past “leaves considerable scope for individual judgment” (Elsness, 2009a: 228). Thus, on the whole the present perfect is more frequent in British English than in American English. However, Elsness (2009a) also compared the LOB and Brown corpora from 1961 with the FLOB and Frown corpora from 1991/1992. He concludes that there is still a difference between British and American English, i.e. the present perfect is used more often in British English (2009: 242). However, the gap seems to be closing and “the decline in the use of the present perfect is now slowing down in AmE” and “BrE is approaching the level of AmE” (Elsness, 2009a: 243).

When looking at Australian English, the use of the present perfect seems to be more widespread in this variety than in British or American English (Engel and Ritz, 2000: 137). Engel and Ritz found four main points in their research including a number of sources, such as newspaper articles, radio programs and television broadcasts (Engel and Ritz, 2000: 119). First of all, the present perfect can be used in Australian English in sentences where a specific time adverb referring to the past is involved (Engel and Ritz, 2000: 137). As an example, Engel and Ritz mention the sentence:

24. Pernice, a legend of the ‘alternative country’ scene has toured the US [...] and has played in Australia in March 1999 to great response.

Here, we can find a definite time reference, *in March 1999*, in combination with the present perfect, *has played*.

Secondly, the present perfect can be found in narrative sequences in Australian English (Engel and Ritz, 2000: 137). Additionally, the present perfect can often be found in informal spoken discourse in this variety (Engel and Ritz, 2000: 137). Engel and Ritz state that “the effect of this shift is a foregrounding one: it makes the narration more vivid and instructs the hearer to imagine that s/he is there, now” (2000: 137). This finding is also supported by Elsness, who mentions that the present perfect/past tense ratio is at least twice as high in spoken as in written texts (2009b: 112). The highest percentage of present perfect could be found in ART, which is a corpus made up of unscripted Australian English, i.e. radio talkback (Elsness, 2009b: 112). Finally, the Australian present perfect is

used for stylistic contrasts in narratives according to Engel and Ritz's findings (2000: 137). Engel and Ritz's conclusions are also supported by Elsness (2009b: 112). He finds that the use of the present perfect in Australian English is "at the high end of the scale" (Elsness, 2009b: 112). In his research, Elsness discovers a difference between the various text categories and the percentage of the present perfect use (2009b: 112). Summing up, he points out that "the trend is for the ratio to be at its highest in texts which can be assumed to be generally orientated towards present time – especially in newspaper texts – and particularly low in texts which can be assumed to be orientated towards past time, most notably fictional texts" (Elsness, 2009b: 112).

As mentioned in the first paragraph of this chapter, the fact that American English does not use the present perfect as often as British English does, might be because of the settlement period, where the present perfect was not fully grammaticalized in British English (Hundt, Hay and Gordon, 2004: 567). This would indicate that the use of the present perfect in New Zealand English should be similar to the one in British English, because New Zealand was settled after the grammaticalization of the present perfect (Hundt, Hay and Gordon, 2004: 567). However, this does not seem to be true according to all corpus findings: "in NZE a reverse development can be observed, i.e. the generalization of the present perfect to simple-past-contexts as in *I haven't talked to him last week*" (Hundt, Hay and Gordon, 2004: 568). This innovation applies mainly to spoken New Zealand English though and does not seem to be used in written texts yet (Hundt, Hay and Gordon, 2004: 568). On the other hand, Elsness (2009b: 96) cites an elicitation test carried out by Bauer where informants chose the preterite in cases including specific time reference. The informants also showed a preference for the use of the present perfect as it is in British English in combination with the adverb *yet* (Elsness, 2009b: 96), such as in:

25. Have you read the book I recommended yet?

Elsness (2009b: 96) mentions that this is also supported by Hundt, who found out that the use of the present perfect together with *yet*, *since* and *just* only differs from the British use in very few instances. To sum up, it seems like New Zealand

native speakers use the present perfect and past tense in the same way that British speakers do (Elsness, 2009b: 96). However, there are not a lot of researches available regarding New Zealand English and thus, the situation is not documented exhaustively (Elsness, 2009b: 113).

Chapter 3: Contrastive Analysis and the use of corpora

In Chapter 3, the importance of corpora in linguistic analysis and especially in the area of contrastive analysis will be introduced in 3.1. In 3.2, I will give some general information about the Oslo Multilingual Corpus, which will serve as a basis for my research in this paper.

3.1 Importance of corpora

In order to answer the question to what extent the usage of the English and the German tenses referring to past time events differ, I decided to use a corpus to identify the differences and similarities. As Stig Johansson mentions, it is an opposition to looking upon a language *in abstracto* (2008: 33), but it actually makes it possible to see how a language is used in real pieces of writing. The fact that it is useful to rely on corpora when regarding grammatical constructions is supported by grammars like the Greenbaum's *Oxford English Grammar* or Biber et.al.'s *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. Both of them are almost entirely based on corpora findings (Meyer, 2004: 14). Grammars based on corpora do not only give the possibility to describe the phenomena and constructions, but they also make it easier to give a description of their use (Meyer, 2004: 14). The development of both parallel and translation corpora also increases the importance of corpora in contrastive analysis (Meyer, 2004: 22). On the one hand, they can be used to enhance foreign language teaching and on the other hand, translation theories can be improved by studying corpora (Meyer, 2004: 22).

The use of corpora has increased significantly during the last 20 years, obviously supported by the improved technology that was brought about by computers (Johansson, 2008: 47). A lot of critics are of the opinion that corpora only offer quantitative data, i.e. by looking at corpora you can tell how often one specific phenomenon occurs in one language (Aarts, 2000: 7). However, corpora also provide a good starting point for language research. Instead of making up examples and explaining linguistic aspect by means of invented sentences, real data can be used and thus, a more realistic picture of a language can be gained. Corpus linguist often argue that e.g. generative grammarians deal with highly

abstract language that seems to be far removed from the actual usage (Meyer, 2004: 3).

3.2 The Oslo Multilingual Corpus

The Oslo Multilingual corpus offers the possibility to have a look at English texts and their German translations as well as German texts with their English translations. So it can be used as both a parallel and a translations corpus (Johansson, 2004: 61ff.). On the one hand, it is possible to observe translation patterns because original texts are translated into foreign languages (Meyer, 2004: 23). Additionally, this type of corpora also enables researchers to compare the structure, e.g. of a grammatical or lexical construction, in two or more languages (Meyer, 2004: 23). Thus, conclusions can be drawn with regard to the similarity or difference of this aspect between the languages in focus.

I chose to use the English-German-Norwegian parallel corpus (En-Ge-No, respectively the No-En-Ge for Norwegian originals and Ge-En-No for German originals). This corpus contains original texts from all three languages and their translations into the other two languages. Specific software was developed in order to align the original sentences with their translated counterparts (Meyer, 2004: 23). It is split into three databases, so you can start with English originals and see their German and Norwegian translations and also German originals can be used as a starting point for examining the Norwegian and English translations of the corresponding texts. The aim is to get 25-30 texts from each language. Currently, as of 2006, the En-Ge -No corpus consists of approximately 33 original texts and their translations, the Ge-En-No part of 21 originals and the No-En-Ge of 22 original texts. The distribution of words among the languages, when it comes to originals, differs slightly though, i.e. the English original texts make up about 432 500 words, the Norwegian originals 289 230 and finally, the German original texts about 287 400 words. The En-Ge-No has 442 200 German words that function as a translation from the English originals, and the Ge-En-No consists of 305 800 English words translated from German. Most of the texts in the corpus are fictional.

These numbers show that the OMC is a rather small corpus, compared to for instance the BNC (British National Corpus) with 100 million words or COCA with over 410 million words (Corpus of Contemporary American English). However, the preterite/perfect distinction can be described as a grammatical phenomenon. Tenses are used in every sentence and thus, you can expect that they appear quite frequently even though the corpus itself is rather small (Meyer, 2002: 14).

Chapter 4: Corpus analysis of the English and German data – the preterite

In Chapter 4, I will have a look at the actual data taken from the OMC that includes the preterite. In 4.1 I will first present the hits from the English original preterite data, i.e. from the En-Ge-No part of the OMC. Then, the German translations will be presented in 4.2 and possible variations in the use of the preterite in the English originals and the German translations will be focused upon. Secondly, the German original preterite hits will be examined in 4.3, taken from the Ge-En-No part of the OMC, before illustrating their English translations in 4.4. At the end of 4.3 and 4.4, a comparison of the use of the preterite both in the German and English originals and the English and German translations will be given.

4.1 The English original preterite verb forms

In this part of my research, English preterite forms will be focused upon, such as:

26. Their early experiences had given them the identity they needed, and as long as they **stayed** together this identity became more reassuring, so that in middle age they seemed to have as substantial a life as anyone else of their acquaintance.
(AB1)

In order to carry out my research, I chose to use high frequency verbs and looked at their hits for the preterite in the corpus. The words I included in my research are *take – took, come – came, happen – happened, give – gave, go – went, hear – heard, make – made, find – found, be – was/were, think – thought* and *stay – stayed*. Additionally, the verbs *think, be* and *stay* were also examined in order to have a wider semantic range. The other verbs represent dynamic verbs, i.e. verbs that may show progressive or continued action, and *think, be* and *stay* can be described as stative verbs. Moreover, the three stative verbs are also atelic, i.e. they do not present an event or state as complete. To search for the verbs in the OMC, I entered their preterite forms, i.e. *took, came, happened, gave, went, heard, made, was/were, stayed, thought* and *found*, directly into the search engine of the corpus. I selected the En-Ge-No part and made sure the search was performed in the English originals by picking “English” as the language and “Original” in the box next to it.

A total of 888 hits are included in this part of the research. The preterite of *come* can be found 442 times in the corpus, *took* 331 times, *gave* 201 times, *heard* has 209 hits, *found* 258 hits, *went* appears 494 times in the OMC, *happened* 117 times, *made* 476 times, *was/were* 8492 times, *thought* 442 times and *stayed* 53 times. Since I have to go through all the hits, the numbers of hits of some of the verbs here were too high to examine them manually. That is why I chose a random sample of the verbs. The OMC does not have an automatic function to do so and therefore, I picked them manually. I wanted to end up with approximately 100 hits of each verb, i.e. I picked every 5th occurrence of *came*, every 3rd of *took*, every 2nd of *gave*, every 2nd of *heard*, every 2nd of *found*, every 5th of *went*, every hit of *happened*, every hit if *stayed*, every 4th of *thought*, every 80th of *was/were* and every finally every 5th occurrence of *made*. Even though I tried to choose the hits in a way that would leave me with approximately 100 hits per verb, it has to be borne in mind that some verbs, namely *found*, *heard*, *happened*, *stayed*, *thought* and *made* have the same preterite and past participle form. Consequently, some of the hits in these cases were disregarded for my preterite research because they also include present perfects, past perfects or passives, such as in example 27, where a past perfect form is used:

27. Better than he would have done if he '**d stayed** with us.
(PDJ3)

I did not include past progressive verb forms either as part of my research. Thus, the verb forms representing the progressive aspect were not included as a part of my research.

By choosing the verbs in the way mentioned above, I tried to include a wide semantic range and various verbs in the research. However, the results will be influenced by doing so. I did not always use e.g. every 2nd hit of the verb and in the case of *stayed* I did not use a sample at all, but all hits that could be found in the corpus. Thus, the hits of every single verb used were found in a different way and this may have consequences regarding the results. In the cases where all hits were included a more realistic picture is represented by the results taken into consideration, while the samples chosen might in some cases highlight various aspects or uses and represent less than what could be regarded normal of others.

This has to be borne in mind throughout the whole thesis since in all the categories looked upon, i.e. both German and English and in both cases the preterite and the present perfect, the hits used are a mixture of samples and all hits found in the corpus.

I decided to do it like that nevertheless in order to include a wider semantic range than I would have done when only including a couple of verbs in the research and looking at all examples from only a few verbs. The following table shows an overview of how many hits of each verb are included in my research:

Table 1: Verb distribution of the English original preterite verb forms included in the research

Verb	Total number of hits	Number of hits regarded in research
<i>was/were</i>	8492	66
<i>thought</i>	442	91
<i>stayed</i>	53	53
<i>gave</i>	201	101
<i>made</i>	476	60
<i>happened</i>	117	61
<i>came</i>	442	89
<i>took</i>	331	114
<i>went</i>	494	94
<i>heard</i>	209	65
<i>found</i>	258	94
TOTAL	11515	888

Finally, it also has to be kept in mind that both fictional and non-fictional texts are combined in the En-Ge-No part of the OMC and the hits themselves are not marked with regard to that and it is not possible to choose them separately. Thus, both forms are part of the research and again, this can influence the results found here.

4.1.1 English preterite forms used with time adverbials

In order to carry out my research, I decided to place the hits found in various categories. The first one, adverbials, is a formal one, while the remaining ones can be considered semantic categories. All hits will be focused upon in the semantic categories, i.e. also the ones that are presented here and include a time adverbial. To begin with, I decided to have a look at the instances where the preterite is used with a time adverb that indicates a point of time in the past, such as in:

28. **In the year 1185**, the Emperor of Japan **was** a seven-year old boy named Antoku. (CSA1)

Here, I focused on the clauses in which the preterite forms of the verbs appear. In total, 90 of the 888 preterite sentences consist of the preterite verb form and a time adverbial, thus approximately 10,1% of all hits.

The adverb indicating time that can be found most often in combination with the preterite form of the verbs included in the research is *then*. As mentioned in 2.2.1, also the research that underlies the making of the *Longman Dictionary of Spoken and Written English* describes that *then* is the adverb most often found in combination with the preterite form of verbs (Biber et.al. 1999: 467). In my research, a total number of 27 sentences include this time adverb, i.e. about 30,0% of all time adverbials and thus, it is also here the most common time adverb used with the preterite in English. Here are some examples from the corpus:

29. **Then** he **came** towards me with her in the dazed way people emerge from the dark of a cinema to daylight.
(NG1)

30. **Then** David **went** up into the great shadowy bedroom, where lights from an upstairs window in a neighbouring house a good thirty yards away sent gleams and shadows on to the ceiling.
(DL1)

31. **Then** he **took** his red-ink pen and wrote carefully on the cover of the Preston Report.
(FF1)

32. After the lesson he told me that he wanted to buy a really good shirt he 'd seen somewhere, and I enquired into the resale potential of the item with a view to recovering my outlay in case of bankruptcy, which amused him further; and **then** I **gave** him my terms.
(JB1)

33. For a moment Alice did not recognise her, **thought** it was some tired middle-aged woman, and **then thought**, But she looks so worn out.
(DL2)

In all four examples, *then* is used in order to indicate an event that happened in the past. The use of *then* here indicates some sort of time sequence, i.e. several events that are depicted after one another. In 30, 31 and 31 it is impossible to indicate what happened right before the sentences themselves without considering the context, examples 32 and 33, however, describe two events in one sentence that took place after each other. Here, in both sentences the last clause is initiated by the time adverb *then*. As mentioned above, *then* presents about 30,0% of all the time adverbial hits.

The remaining time adverbials include a number of different ones. Here are some of the other examples that present the use of the preterite verb form in combination with time adverbs beside *then*:

34. Louis Zablonsky **went** through Heathrow Airport on **the Wednesday morning** with no trouble.
(FF1)

35. When they **came the first time** to Zebulon County, in the spring of 1890, and saw that half the land they had already bought, sight unseen, was under two feet of water part of the year and another quarter of it was spongy, they went back to Mason City and stayed there for the summer and winter.
(JSM1)

36. The morning Marshall **found** the lump, **January 24, 1848**, all of California belonged to Mexico, but Mexico and the United States had been at war, and the two countries were in the final phases of negotiating a treaty under which Mexico would cede "Upper" California to the United States.
(GK1)

37. **About three weeks after** Red Razberry Zingers **went** national, enthusiastically — if gravely — pitched by the Sharp Cereal Professor ("Nope, nothing wrong here"), the first mother had taken her little one to the hospital, nearly hysterical and sure the child was bleeding internally. (SK1)

38. **Not so long ago**, a monster **came** to the small town of Castle Rock, Maine. (SK1)

39. And **now** there were the two black and white kittens **found** abandoned on the grass verge of the coast road as they came back in the van from Ipswich. (PDJ3)

The examples show that there is a distinction between time adverbials indicating exact points of time in the past and others that only give a vague impression of when the event or state happened. Examples 34, 35 and 36 above express a distinct point of time in the past. Example 34 talks about *the* Wednesday morning. Here, the definite article indicates that it is being talked about a specific Wednesday morning and the sentence could not refer to any Wednesday morning. Example 35 uses *in the spring of 1890* in order to indicate the time when they first came to Zebulon County. The most specific date can be found in example 36: *January 24, 1848*. Here, the date itself serves as the time indication.

Examples 37, 38 and 39 also determine that the events took place in the past, however, the exact point of time is not expressed and remains rather vague. To sum up, *then* seems to be the time adverbial most frequently used in combination with the preterite. Additionally, there are a number of various adverbials indicating both specific and vague points of time in the past. As Leech (2004: 13) mentions one element of the past tense meaning is that "the speaker has a definite time in mind". By using definite time adverbials in the same clause, the definite point of time is made explicit.

4.1.2 English preterite expresses regularity

In total, three semantic categories, namely regularity, sequence and single events, can be depicted when the English preterite hits. All hits, i.e. also the ones appearing together with time adverbials indicating a specific point of time in the

past, are taken into consideration here. First of all, it has to be mentioned that the distinction between the various semantic categories was not always straightforward and in some of the cases, several interpretations might be possible. This applies especially to the decision whether to put a sentence into the single or the sequence category, such as in:

40. And the smile stayed on her face, for she never **doubted** her victory.
(AB1)

Here, on the one hand you could argue that a single event is involved here because the smile does not stay on her face first and then she doubts her victory, but the two parts express two different sides of the situation, namely the physical feature of her smile and her thoughts. On the other hand, two things are described here that clearly have a close relation and not only one single event. There are some borderline cases in the hits taken from the OMC and thus, a small number of them might also allow a different interpretation, which can influence the overall result slightly.

The first very small category depicted here expresses regularities, i.e. events or states that happened regularly or repeatedly in the past. Very often adverbials indicating frequency can be found in these sentences. In total, 26 hits fall into this category. Here are a few examples from the corpus material:

41. For this reason Hartmann **took** a sedative every night and ensured untroubled sleep.
(AB1)
42. A shadowy girl, a niece of her late husband, was invited, and **came** early **on Friday afternoons** to help with the preparations.
(AB1)
43. She took up the Tuesday and Thursday work at the school — unpaid of course, but someone has to hear the beginners, and the teacher sure as hell does n't have the time, what with thirty or so little faces staring up in every class — and Jane and Arthur had no children of their own, and Jane loved children, loved them — and took some comfort from the fact that Arthur **always made** love to her **on Tuesday and Thursday nights**.
(FW1)

In all examples, we can find time adverbials that make it clear that the events happened repeatedly in the past. Example 41 describes the fact that Hartmann took his sedative *every night*, thus indicating that he took it regularly every evening before bedtime. In the second sentence, example 42, the expression *early on Friday afternoons* indicates that the niece came regularly every Friday to help. Finally, both *always* and *on Tuesday and Thursday* in example 43 express Arthur and Jane's habits. As we have seen, in sentences indicating regularity time adverbials are used in order to express the habitual aspect of the events. The fact that the preterite is used here can be explained by the fact that the regular events took place in the past and not at the present moment anymore. As mentioned by Greenbaum (1996: 254), the preterite is used in order to indicate that something is completed at the time of writing or saying and that is what the expressed situations here are.

4.1.3 Preterite used to indicate sequence

Moving on, a second semantic group can be found and I chose to summarize them as "sequence". The sentences that fall into this category list several events located in the past, which happen after one another. Also Leech (2004: 14) states that the past tense can refer to events that happened in sequence and that is why I chose to put all these sentences into one category. Most of the hits from the corpus research in this group are rather long sentences. In total, 29,7% of the sentences fall into that category. Here are some examples from my research that fall into this category:

44. Hydrogen and oxygen, mixed in a certain way, make water today, **made** water billions of years ago, and presumably will make water for a long time to come.
(SJG1)
45. "Look," Andrew said, "I know you mean well, Miss de Grey, and I 'm sorry about the way I spoke when you **came** in here."
(AH1)
46. He shouted up at the light which carried on with its storm-at-sea impression, taking on hurricane status when Philip **took** hold of its post and shook it violently from side to side.
(ST1)

47. I made a friendly sign, **went** back into the house and, creeping past the sleeping form of the police officer, slid into my room.
(BO1)

48. After we had successfully fought the fire and mopped the soaking floor, everyone **went** back to bed.
(BO1)

49. Caleb Martin had dropped the gun with which he **made** his brave attempt.
(RR1)

In example 44, it is very easy to see that a sequence is involved here. The time line presented here, starting from the past, continuing over the present and going over to the future can be described as a sequence. Example number 45 is representative for a lot of the sentences that I chose to put in this category. It is a sentence including the word *when*, which is used in these cases for expressing a sequence of events. In the example mentioned several events are depicted – the fact that someone came in and that he spoke to her.

Example 46 describes a typical sequence, which also could be found very often in this category. Several events are listed after each other and all of them took place in the past. In cases like these, Leech (2004: 14) states that the clauses have to remain in the same order, otherwise the meaning would be different. Finally, some of the sentences that indicate some sort of sequence are of the same type as examples 48 and 49. Here, both a past perfect tense and a preterite form can be found in one sentence. In both sentences, the past perfect form is followed by a preterite form. This means that the event presented in the past perfect happened before the event expressed by a preterite form. However, both events are located in the past and the past perfect event is dated further back in the past than the situation expressed by means of a preterite verb form.

To sum up, there are a few different instances that I chose to combine under the main category “sequence”. There are events that take place after one another, sentences including *when* and finally, sentences that consist of both a past perfect and a preterite form. Thus, Leech’s approach to past tenses used for events that happen in sequence can be supported by the results found in my research.

4.1.4 English preterite expresses single events

Finally, the last semantic group of the English preterite forms is the one that I chose to summarize as single events, such as in:

50. "I **was** scared she 'd say no," he said.

(AT1)

Several authors have earlier described this part of the past tense meaning. Greenbaum (1996: 254) states that the preterite is used for situations that occurred in the past and are completed in the present time. Also Hasselgård et.al. (2007: 185), Biber et.al. (1999: 254) and Leech (2004: 13) express the idea that this is the most common use of the past tense in English. In this category, mainly shorter sentences are included that consist of one single event that is located in the past time and thus, the preterite is used in these cases. A total of 56,0% of the hits regarded in my research material fall into this category. To begin with, I will present some examples that express single event. Here are some examples from this category:

51. For example, when I used to think about exercise as aerobic conditioning or muscle strengthening, I **found** it very difficult to motivate myself to do it.

(JSM1)

52. He **found** work as a woodcutter on Utz's estate at Čéske Krížove.

(BC1)

53. Bad luck, he **gave** himself away.

(DL2)

54. I **heard** the air whispering, the walls talking, the chair complaining, the floor pacing, the insects gossiping.

(B01)

55. This was unlike her — again glances were exchanged among the adults, who **took** over the job of getting the children's noise out of her way.

(DL1)

56. And when the police did come to his school because some of the children had set alight a bus in frustration that **found** release in ugly elation at destruction, the children expected him to stand between them and the police; he had not been able to keep petrol and matches out of their hands as he had kept stones.

[\(NG1\)](#)

57. Which sounded about right, **thought** Robin.

[\(MW1\)](#)

58. The only thing of interest that **happened** — apart from the negative fact of Harry's absence — was that Angus admired Natalie's hoop earrings; it occurred to him that she was just the sort of woman who would enjoy ten minutes' sex while changing for dinner, or even twenty minutes, and if she saw something in Arthur she might see even more in him, Angus.

[\(FW1\)](#)

59. "What **happened** to him?" he spluttered.

[\(RD1\)](#)

Examples 51 and 52 represent two different uses of the verb *find*. In the first sentence, it is described how the narrator feels about something, thus focusing on the emotional aspect of *find*. The second sentence though, presents the more physical side of the verb. However, in both cases the sentences express states or events located in the past and that is why the preterite is used here. Sentence 53 is a very short sentence, where clearly only one past time event is involved. Example 54 is longer, but still it does only depict one past time event, namely what the narrator hears.

Moving on, a lot of the instances that fall into the single event category are relative clauses, such as in examples 55 and 56. Relative clauses in my corpus material mainly add additional information to a person, thing etc. That is why it is not surprising that in these cases, single events or states are presented rather than a sequence of several ones. Almost all the sentences including *happened* and *thought* can be described as single event clauses. In the case of *thought*, as in example 57, it is often used in the same way as *said* when indicating direct speech, only that it indicates what the person thought. These situations are occasions that only occur once and that is why so many of the *thought* hits fit into

this category. Thinking about the semantics of *happen*, it does not come as a surprise that it mostly refers to single events located in the past. The word is used to state that an event takes, took or will take place once, as in examples 58 and 59.

4.1.5 Reference to given or new time

When looking at the results, especially at the single event category, the question arises to what extent the tenses presented can be assumed to be known to the reader or not. In order to figure out more about this issue, the context of the sentences has to be taken into consideration as well. Since the number of hits included in my research is very high, I decided to choose a random sample in order to figure out whether the preterite forms refer to new times or times that are given. In the end, I had a look at the context of every 8th instance, leaving me with a total of 121 hits and I chose a context of ten sentences before the sentence where the English preterite hit appears. This way of choosing the random sample might have an influence on the results shown here, however, the number of hits that are part of this research are too high to look at every single instance manually. 67,8% of these hits referred to new times and 32,2% to given times. Here are some examples where the preterite in English presents a known point of time:

60. Travelling through the great French hinterland had even more of a submarine feeling about it because of the weather: occasionally, it is true, the sun came through; but mostly it remained cool and overcast, with a slight drizzle, a gentle opaqueness obliterating outlines and blurring individual objects.

The liquid lines and masses of hills, large dark forests smouldering with autumn colours, undulations, the slopes of disappearing mountains.

I **stayed** away from main roads.

(ABR1)

61. He took possession of the parcel, which was surprisingly large and heavy and crisscrossed with an intimidating pattern of Sellotape, and was slowly borne downwards to the basement which **gave** access to the firm's small car park and his waiting Jaguar.

(PDJ3)

As the examples above show, it is not always necessary to actually have a look at ten sentences before in order to figure out whether new or given time is presented. In example 61, the sentence itself gives the indication that a new time

is referred to here. In this case, the relative clause adds additional information to the sentence and thus, it can be seen as a new time. In example 60, there seems to be no information in the sentences before when the event took place, but these sentences can rather be seen as a description of the place where the speaker is.

Moving on, there were also a number of hits that present given time, such as in:

62. They slowly descended the stairs, one flight, two, passing rooms, and rooms, which they were imagining full of children, relatives, guests, and came again into their bedroom.

[...]

Then they looked at each other.

Tears ran down their cheeks.

They **made** love, there, on their bed.

(DL1)

63. **The next day**, after much begging and some bribery, Dad was freed.

He went to work that day and found that he had been sacked.

During that time Mum had succeeded in finding a room for us to rent.

She had also found a way to pay a month's rent in advance.

Dad **came** to his new home bad-tempered and in a violent mood.

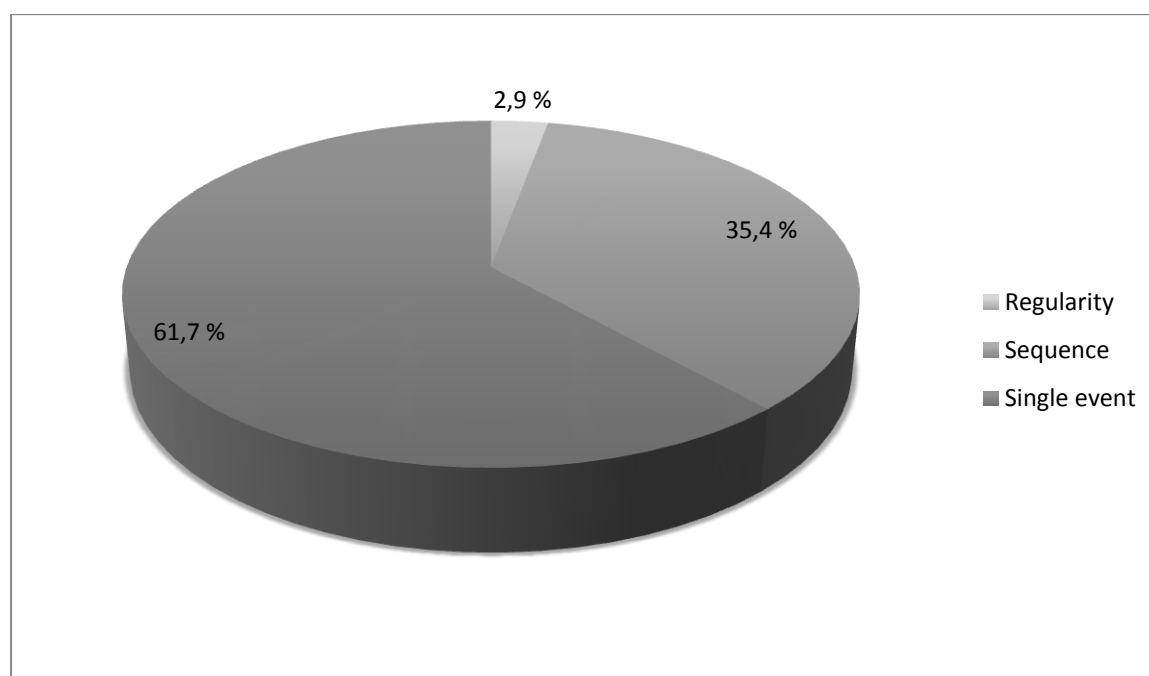
(B01)

In example 62 a sequence is depicted. By looking at the sentences before, it becomes clear that all the situations listed occurred after each other during the same point of time in the past. Thus, the time stated in the sentence where the respective hit of *made* can be found, can be assumed to be given. A lot of the hits where the time can be considered given are of the same kind and represent sequences. As mentioned regarding the hits presenting new time references, also in the case of given time, a context of ten sentences is not always necessary in order to figure out whether the sentence expresses old or given time. Here, in example 63, the expression *the next day*, which appears four sentences before the hit of *came*, indicates that also the relevant hit of *came* happened on *the next day*. In this case, a specific time indication is used some sentences before, which makes the reader understand when the event took place. In order to draw conclusion about given and new time, the instances of the present perfect have to be looked at as well and this will be done later in this paper.

4.1.6 Summary of the English preterite use

To sum up, the following figure shows an overview in which semantic context the preterite verb forms are used in my corpus material:

Figure 1: Indications of the preterite verb forms in English original texts



Events that happened regularly in the past can be found in about 2,9% of the sentences. Moving on, the second largest group is the one that I chose to call “sequence”, i.e. sequences of several events or states that are depicted in one sentence. This category accounts for 35,4% of all the hits. Finally, most of the preterite verb forms found in my research refer to single past time events. In total, 61,7% of all the preterite uses fall into this category. As mentioned earlier, the way how the results were collected have to be borne in mind though since they might have influenced the results presented here.

In addition, in 10,1% of the cases a time adverbial is involved in the sentence where the preterite verb form occurs. This can be described as a formal category and not as a semantic one, which the percentages shown in the figure above represent. The percentage of time adverbs might seem to be low, but as we are dealing with extracts from books, it is not surprising that the exact point of time is not indicated in each sentence.

In general, the findings reported earlier by e.g. Biber et.al. (1999) or Leech (2004) regarding the use of the preterite are supported by my investigation. The preterite is used in combination with time adverbs indicating specific time, in sequences and, the most important aspect, it is used to indicate that a situation is completed at the present point of time.

4.2 The German translations

In this section, the German translations of the English preterite forms will be focused upon, such as in:

64. She **was** particularly good with bombed-out families, whom she tirelessly strove to see rehoused.

[\(AB1\)](#)

Besonders gut **war** sie zu ausgebombten Familien und unermüdlich in ihren Bemühungen, ihnen neue Unterkünfte zu besorgen.

[\(AB1TD\)](#)

First of all, the numbers here vary from the 888 sentences that were included in 4.1. Some sentences are not aligned correctly, i.e. the corresponding sentence does not occur together with the English result, but a different one. Additionally, the English preterite forms are not always translated directly into German. Some verb forms for instance are realized differently or by a completely different expression or construction, such as an adverb, that is used in order to convey the same meaning, such as in example 65, where the adverb *zufällig* ("by accident") is used instead of translating *happened to be*:

65. Halfway down the Molenstraat lived one Raoul Levy, a Polish Jew who had settled in Belgium after the war and who also **happened** to be a second cousin of Louis Zablonsky of London.

[\(FF1\)](#)

Dort, in der Mittleren Molenstraat, lebte ein gewisser Raoul Levy, ein polnischer Jude, der sich nach dem Krieg in Belgien angesiedelt hatte und **zufällig** ein Vetter zweiten Grades von Louis Zablonsky aus London war.

[\(FF1TD\)](#)

In examples like these, the sentence itself has been re-written in order to make it more idiomatic in the target language.

In order to find the corresponding verb forms, I went through the translations manually. Bearing in mind that not all English preterite forms have a German translation, the following table shows how many hits of each verb were translated into German:

Table 2: German translations of the English preterite forms included in the research

Verb	Number of hits translated into German
<i>was/were</i>	63
<i>thought</i>	82
<i>stayed</i>	43
<i>gave</i>	98
<i>went</i>	79
<i>made</i>	58
<i>found</i>	89
<i>happened</i>	41
<i>heard</i>	60
<i>took</i>	104
<i>came</i>	80
TOTAL	797

The following table shows how many hits of each verb were translated into which tense in the German translation.

Table 3: Distribution of the tenses and constructions found in the German translations of the English original preterite forms included in research

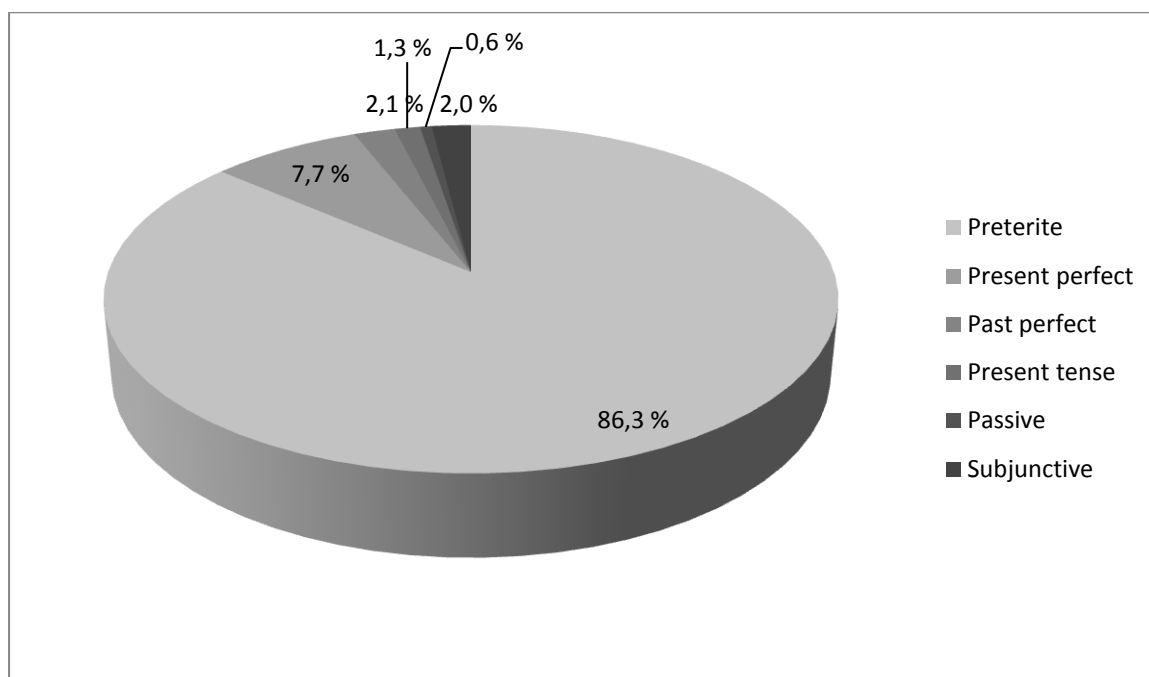
Verb	Preterite	Present perfect	Present	Past perfect	Passive (past and present)	Subjunctive (past and present)
<i>made</i>	46	4	1	5	1	1

<i>thought</i>	80	1				1
<i>came</i>	66	8	2		2	2
<i>went</i>	71	6				2
<i>gave</i>	86	9		2	1	
<i>was/were</i>	57	1	2			3
<i>stayed</i>	40	1	1	1		
<i>happened</i>	20	11	4	2		4
<i>took</i>	98	4		2		
<i>heard</i>	50	8		1		1
<i>found</i>	74	8		4	1	2
TOTAL	688	61	10	17	5	16

As mentioned in the table, I did not distinguish between the passive in the past and in the present, but I looked at all the passive constructions combined. The same applies to the subjunctive. All instances, both present and past, were put into the same category “subjunctive”. This classification was used throughout the whole thesis, i.e. also later when e.g. the English translations of the German preterite forms are regarded, all passive forms, i.e. past and present, are combined and so are the subjunctives.

The preterite seems to be the favored translation for the English preterite forms in German, followed by the present perfect. There are also quite a few translations that include the past perfect in German. Additionally, a small number of the English preterite forms were translated into a present tense, subjunctive or passive construction in German. Both the preterite and the present perfect could be found in the translations of every word in the research. The remaining few percent of the German translations include the other forms, i.e. the past perfect, the subjunctive, the present tense and the passive. The following illustration shows the overall distribution of the German translations:

Figure 2: German translations of the English preterite forms – overall distribution



4.2.1 Preterite used in the German translation

To begin with, the sentences including the preterite in the German translations will be focused upon. With a total of 86,3% they represent by far the most common translation of the preterite form in English. Here are some examples from the verbs included in the research:

66. He **made** a final tour of the house, [...].

(AT1)

Er **machte** einen letzten Rundgang durchs Haus, [...].

(AT1TD)

67. Then Edward **gave** a particularly piercing yelp, and the two of them rushed home.

(AT1)

Dann **jaulte** Edward besonders durchdringend auf, und Herr und Hund machten sich eilends auf den Heimweg.

(AT1TD)

68. When I **found** an opportunity I fled screaming towards the door, out of the room, but he caught me in the passage, under the torrential rain.

(B01)

Als sich eine Möglichkeit **ergab**, floh ich schreiend zur Tür hinaus, doch er erwischte mich draußen im strömenden Regen.

(BO1TD)

69. "On Friday morning," remembered Virginia, "the vessel careened over on her starboard side and we **heard** the beams crack.

(GK1)

"Am Freitag morgen", erinnerte sich Virginia, "legte sich das Schiff steuerbord, und wir **hörten**, wie die Balken knackten.

(GK1TD)

70. We could n't afford hotels, anyway; a fun fair for the use of our kind **came** to our area at Easter, the circus **came** at Christmas, and we picnicked in the no-man's-land of veld between the minedumps, where in the summer a spruit ran between the reeds and my father showed us how the weaver birds make their hanging nests.

(NG1)

Wir konnten uns ohnehin kein Hotel leisten; zu Ostern **kam** eine Kirmes, die unsereins zugänglich war, in unsere Gegend, der Zirkus **kam** zu Weihnachten, und wir picknickten im Niemandsland des Velds zwischen Abraumhalden, wo im Sommer ein kleiner Bach zwischen Schilfsäumen floß, und mein Vater zeigte uns, wie die Webervögel ihre hängenden Nester bauen.

(NG1TD)

Examples 66, 67 and 68 depict sequences of events happening. Thus, they can be depicted as chronological stories. As mentioned by Fabricius-Hansen (2009: 513), German uses the preterite form in chronological narrations and that is why the preterite verb form was also chosen in the German translation here. The use of the time adverb *then*, "dann" in the German translation, can be seen as an additional indication that several events are being told after each other. Moving on, examples 69 and 70 consist of the preterite form in combination with a time adverbial: *On Friday morning*, "am Freitag morgen" and *at Easter/at Christmas*, "zu Ostern/zum Weihnachten". In example 69, a single event that happened in the past is described. Example 70 states a happening that took place regularly in the past. As stated by Fabricius-Hansen (2009: 511) events and states that occurred regularly or repeatedly in the past can often be found in combination with the preterite in German.

4.2.2 Present perfect chosen in German translation

Moving on, I will have a look at the instances where the present perfect was chosen in the German translations instead of repeating the preterite form from the English original. As we have seen earlier, a total number of 61 hits were translated in that way. Germans almost entirely use the present perfect in spoken language as mentioned by Fabricius-Hansen (2009: 514). That is why it does not come as a surprise that most sentences that have a German present perfect translation consist of direct speech, i.e. a person uttering a sentence. Here are several examples where the present perfect was chosen as the German translation in utterances:

71. And besides, Papa **took** Mama to town this afternoon."

(GN1)

Und außerdem **ist** Papa heute nachmittag mit Mama in die Stadt **gefahren**."

(GN1TD)

72. "My three **went** to ordinary schools," said Dorothy, not letting this slide; but Molly did not accept the challenge.

(DL1)

"Meine drei **sind** alle in normale Schulen **gegangen**", sagte Dorothy, die das nicht unwidersprochen lassen konnte, aber Molly ging auf die Herausforderung nicht ein.

(DL1TD)

73. We **gave** them a hiding they 'll never forget.

(RDO1)

Wir **haben** ihnen so furchtbar die Hucke **vollgehauen**, daß sie das nie vergessen werden.

(RDO1TD)

74. I **found** it.

(DL2)

Ich **habe** es **gefunden**.

(DL2TD)

In examples 71 and 72 it is very easy to see that we are dealing with direct speech, as it is indicated by the use of quotation marks in both sentences. In order to figure out whether sentence 73 and 74 also are direct speech, it is necessary to have a look at the context. To do so, the search in the OMC has to be revised, i.e. I

chose to have a look at a context of five sentences before and five sentences after the sentence including *found*. In some cases, you had to look at an even wider context, e.g. 20 sentences before the occurrence of the verb involved. I will cite the context of example 74 here:

75. [...]
"I was here first.
Before any of you.
This was my place.
I **found** it.
[...]
(DL2)
76. [...] "Ich war zuerst hier ... vor euch allen.
Es war mein Haus.
Ich **habe** es **gefunden**.
Ich habe zu jedem gesagt: "Ja, komm!
Komm Mann, das hier ist Liberty Hall".
[...]
(DL2TD)

As example 75 shows, it is possible to figure out that we face a direct speech instance in sentence 74. The quotation marks before *I was here first* indicate that a spoken sentence is expressed here.

In some of the cases where the present perfect was chosen in German, the language used in both the original and the translation can be described as rather colloquial. Thus, it seems to be necessary to use the present perfect in German in order to convey the spoken character of the sentence. Sentence 73 mentioned above can be seen as an example for that. The expression *gave them a hiding* can be described as a colloquial use of the English language, and the same applies to the German translation *die Hucke vollgehauen*. Additionally, an contraction is used, i.e. *they'll* is chosen instead of *they will*. Concluding, we can say that the fact that colloquial expressions are used in some of the sentences makes the use of the present perfect in German understandable. In these cases, the translators decided to replace the preterite form with the present perfect form, which can be described as the form most often used in spoken German, as it is also mentioned by Hennig (2000: 180) and Fabricius-Hansen (2009: 514). Thus, the sentences

represent German everyday speech more naturally by using the present perfect instead of the preterite.

In this context, the question arises whether there are instances of direct speech where the translator chose the preterite in German instead of the present perfect. In my research, there were not a lot of sentences including direct, spoken conversation that were translated into the preterite in German. In total, 14 sentences that consist of direct speech were translated into the preterite instead of the present perfect. This number is not very high, that is why drawing conclusions becomes rather difficult. Additionally, it has to be borne in mind that hits from both fiction and non-fiction are part of the En-Ge-No of the OMC. In order to investigate instances of direct speech, it would be useful if you could focus on fiction and non-fiction separately. However, e.g. in the following the translator could have chosen a different verb form as well:

77. "Naw, Papa said that when the emancipation **came**, his daddy was just a little boy, and he had been hard of hearing so his master and everyone on the plantation had to call him twice to get his attention.

(GN1)

"Nee, Papa hat erzählt, als die Befreiung **kam**, war sein Vati noch ein kleiner Bub und hat schlecht gehört, und so haben sein Herr und alle andern auf der Plantage immer zweimal rufen müssen, bis er es mitbekommen hat.

(GN1TD)

The language used here is very colloquial and thus, the present perfect might be expected in German. The English form *naw* instead of *no*, and *Papa* and *daddy* instead of *father* make it clear that a spoken discourse is expressed in 77. That is why the translator might also have chosen the present perfect in German in order to convey the same casual meaning.

Secondly, the present perfect was used in German in some of the translations that have a 1st person narrator. Here are some of the sentences:

78. We were in a sort of back room, and at one point we **gave** a particularly loud whoop at a particularly long word and a waiter looked in to see if we were calling for anything and then went away.

(JB1)

Wir waren in einer Art Hinterzimmer, und an einer Stelle **haben** wir bei einem ganz besonders langen Wort ganz besonders laut **gebrüllt**, und da

hat ein Kellner hereingeschaut, ob wir irgendwas haben wollten, und ist dann wieder gegangen.
(JB1TD)

79. They **took** me home that night in Gillian's rebarbatively quotidian motor-car.
(JB1)
Sie **haben** mich an dem Abend in Gillians degoutant ordinärem Automobil nach Hause **gebracht**.
(JB1TD)

80. We do not know what **happened** then — or subsequently...
(OS1)
Wir wissen nicht, was damals — oder später **geschehen ist**...
(OS1TD)

In the first three sentences there are personal pronouns that indicate that a 1st person narrator is telling the story: *we* in 78 and 80 and *me* in 79. As mentioned by Markus (1977: 49), German uses the preterite form when expressing inner monologues or stream of consciousness and according to him, the use of the present perfect seems to be rather unusual here. However, the translators here chose to use the present perfect instead. By doing so, it is focused on the fact that the narrator actually tells the story with his or her own words. Especially in examples 78 and 79, the language used in the English original is rather colloquial and this might explain why the translator chose to use the present perfect. By choosing the present perfect instead, the text appears easier and the reader can get the feeling that the writer talks to him directly. Thus, the translators seem to have chosen the present perfect in order to create a closer connection between the writer and the reader.

The last example includes the translation of *happened*. *Happened* has a total of four hits where a 1st person narrator is used in combination with the present perfect in the German translations. As mentioned earlier, it also has the highest percentage of instances that were not translated into the preterite. Regarding this from a retrospective point of view, it seems to be natural to choose a different form than the preterite. *Geschah*, i.e. the preterite form of *geschehen* “happen”, can be found 36 times in the OMC and *passierte*, which has the same meaning, only nine times. These small numbers state that the preterite form is not very common

here and that is why my research shows that it is used in less than 50% of the translations only.

However, the translators do not seem to be entirely consistent when it comes to inner monologues and personal pronouns in the sentences. Not all of these instances were translated into the present perfect, but the sentences in my research seem to vary here. As stated by Markus (1977: 49), German generally uses the preterite form in cases where an inner monologue or stream of consciousness is involved. However, as the results here show, the translators seem to interpret sentences differently from time to time and choose to focus more on the spoken effect of the sentence than the underlying grammatical one, in these cases the inner monologue. This development might also have to do with the fact that the present perfect in spoken language has become so normal that the translators feel that they would not represent a natural way of expressing your thoughts when using the preterite instead of the present perfect. I will not have the possibility to look into this issue thoroughly in this paper, however, this could be a good starting point for some further research.

4.2.3 Past perfect, subjunctive, present and passive used in German translation

The remaining hits of the English preterite forms were translated into past perfects, subjunctives, present tenses and passive forms. Since all of these forms combined account for only about 7% of all translations, I will not present them as thoroughly as the present perfect translations. The subjunctive sometimes replaces the English preterite forms, as in the following example:

81. The man who 's dead on the stairs **went** to investigate."

(RR1)

Der Mann, der draußen tot auf der Treppe liegt, **sei hinausgegangen**, um nachzusehen."

(RR1TD)

In this sentence, an assumption is presented rather than a fact. In German, the subjunctive has to be used in these cases. There are other similar sentences in the corpus material, e.g. introduced by the adverb *vielleicht* ("maybe"), indicating that something is uncertain and that is why the subjunctive was chosen in German instead of the preterite form as in English.

Some hits from the corpus research were translated into a past perfect form, mainly when two events that happened in the past are presented in one sentence, such as in the following example:

82. He then removed one of his seven figures of Harlequin — *the* Harlequin his grandmother **gave** him as a boy — and, turning it upside down, pointed to the "cross-swords" mark of Meissen, and to an inventory label with a number and letters in code.

(BC1)

Dann nahm er eine seiner sieben Harlekinfiguren in die Hand — *den* Harlekin, den er als Junge von seiner Großmutter **geschenkt bekommen hatte** —, drehte ihn um und zeigte auf die Meißner Marke mit den gekreuzten Schwertern und auf ein Inventaretikett mit einer Zahl und Codebuchstaben.

(BC1TD)

In this case, one of the events is located further in the past than the other one. A Harlequin figure is described and additionally, it is mentioned that his grandmother had given him that one when he was a boy. So we can find two time layers here – the one when the story is told and here, the preterite is used and another one that dates further back in time. In sentences like these, where two past time events which did not occur at the same point of time are described, the past perfect is sometimes used in the German translations instead of the preterite.

Finally, there are a few cases where the preterite form in English was translated into a passive or present tense form in German. Looking at the passives that can be found in the corpus material, it is usually used because of the fact that this expression is more natural in German or the original version simply was not translated word by word. Here is an example:

83. Late that night, the women supplied the lines of men with what hard bread and fresh water they could find, and even a large supply of liquor and brandy **made** its way to the lines.

(GK1)

Spätabends versorgten die Frauen die Männer in den Reihen mit hartem Brot und Wasser, und auch eine beträchtliche Menge Likör und Brandy **wurde gereicht**.

(GK1TD)

Here, the expression *made its way to the lines* was replaced by a different expression *wurde gereicht* ("serve liquor and brandy") in German and this expression requires the passive use. Thus, the sentence had to be modified and re-written in the German translation in order to express an idiomatic German sentence. The same applies to the instances where the present tense was used instead of a preterite verb form. So these instances rather seem to be a way of making the German translation sound more naturally, by replacing the original words with a more appropriate expression in German that in some of the cases requires a different verb form than the one found in the original text.

4.2.4 Summary of the German translations and comparison with the English originals

The majority of the English preterite forms were translated into a preterite form in German as well, i.e. the same verb form was used in both the English originals and the German translations. According to Fabricius-Hansen (2009: 513) the preterite in German is used in chronological stories and in order to indicate that an event is completed in the past. Since most texts from the OMC are fictional, it does not come as a surprise that a lot of chronological stories can be found. The main aspects of the German and the English preterite are similar and that is why the preterite is also used in the German translations in most of the cases.

However, there were also a few instances where the preterite was replaced by the present perfect, mainly in sentences where direct speech was involved. German has a preference for the present perfect in direct speech (Fabricius-Hansen, 2009: 514). A small number of the hits were translated into other forms, such as passives or a subjunctive, but in some of the cases the sentences were re-written in German because by doing so the sentence sounds more idiomatic in German.

4.3 The German preterite

In order to have a look at the preterite used in German, I decided to pick the same verbs that I used for my English research, such as in:

84. In Fällen, wo Verpaarung zwei Fisch-Seelen zu einer einzigen verbunden hatte, **blieb** ein Paar übrig, wie vom braunen und vom weiß-gelben Schmetterlingsfisch.

(KOL1)

In cases where, as a result of pairing, two fishes behaved as one, one pair remained, as in the brown, and the white-and-gold butterfly-fish.

(KOL1TE)

By choosing the same verbs in both languages a more direct comparison becomes possible and additionally, the semantic aspects are similar in both German and English.

First of all, I chose the Ge-En-No part of the OMC and used “German originals” as a starting point in order to search in the German original sentences. In German, there is not only one single verb form expressing the preterite, but the form is different for each person and number. That is why I entered the 1st, 2nd, 3rd person verb forms for the preterite in both singular and plural into the search engine for each of the verbs. However, the 1st person singular and the 3rd person singular are the same and so are the 1st person plural and the 3rd person plural. The following table gives an overview how many hits of each verb were used in my research.

Table 4: German original preterite forms included in the research

Verb	Total number of hits	Number of hits regarded in research
<i>war/warst/waren/wart</i>	2817	74
<i>dachte/dachtes/dachten/dachtet</i>	127	127
<i>blieb/bliebst/blieben/bleibt</i>	140	70
<i>kam/kamst/kamen/kamt</i>	392	101
<i>hörte/hörtest/hörten/hörtet</i>	115	115
<i>machte/machtest/machten/machtet</i>	165	83
<i>fand/fandest/fanden/fandet</i>	118	118
<i>gab/gabst/gaben/gabt</i>	256	143
<i>nahm/nahmst/nahmen/nahmt</i>	115	115

<i>ging/gingst/gingen/gingt</i>	326	109
<i>geschah/passierte</i>	45	44
TOTAL	4596	1099

The preterite verb forms of *kommen* (“come”) occur 392 times in total and I picked a random sample by choosing every 4th instance. *Hear* can be translated into *hören* in German and these forms can be found 117 times in the corpus, so I included all hits in my research. Moving on, there are two expressions for *happen* in German – *geschehen* and *passieren*. The verbs are only used in the 3rd person singular so I entered both *geschah* and *passierte* into the search engine. *Geschah* and *passierte* occur 45 times, so all hits will be a part of my research. The preterite forms of *gehen*, the German equivalent to *go*, can be found 326 times in the OMC and I chose a random sample of every 3rd occurrence. The German translation of *took* appears 115 times in the corpus. All hits are part of my research. The preterite forms of *geben* (“give”) have 256 hits and every second is part of my research. *Finden* (“find”) appears 118 times in the OMC, so again all occurrences are included in my research. *Make* means *machen* in German and in total, 165 hits can be found in the corpus and I chose to use every second occurrence. The preterite forms of *sein* (“be”) can be found 2817 times in the OMC and every 30th hits is part of my research. *Bleiben* (“stay”) occurs 140 times in the corpus and every 2nd hit is included in the total number of hits. Finally, the preterite forms of *denken* (“think”) can be found 127 times and all of them are part of my research. In total, I will have a look at 1099 hits representing German original preterite forms. Just as in the case of the English preterite hits, the results shown here will be influenced by the way the occurrences from the corpus were chosen, i.e. in some of the cases, e.g. *geschah/passierte*, all hits are included while only a sample of some verbs is presented, such as *war/warst/waren/wart*.

As I did with the preterite forms in the English original texts, I decided to divide the hits according to the same categories, i.e. the three semantic categories single past time events/states, sequences and sentences indicating regularity or repeated events. Additionally, the formal category of time adverbials used in combination with the preterite in German was focused upon as well. I chose these

aspects because these are the main characteristics that the authors quoted in Chapter 2 express and additionally, the same categories were used in the English originals too. The following table shows how often the verbs chosen indicate the respective categories.

Table 5: Categories of the preterite forms in the German originals included in the research

Category	Number of hits	Percentage
Single event	768	69,9%
Regularity	50	4,5%
Sequence	281	25,6%

The table shows that most of the preterite verb forms in German fit into the single event category, followed by the sequence one. There are only a few of the hits indicated regularity.

4.3.1 Time adverbials used in combination with a preterite form in German

To begin with, I will have a look at the German examples that consist of a preterite form and a time adverbial indicating a specific time in the past. Again, as in 4.1, this is a formal aspect of the German preterite and the semantic categories will be focused upon later. Here are some examples from the corpus material:

85. Caíron nickte langsam, **dann nahm** er die Kette mit dem goldenen Amulett von seinem Hals und legte sie Atréju um.

(ME1)

Cairon nodded gravely.

Then he took the chain with the golden amulet from his neck and put it around Atreyus.

(ME1TE)

86. So wie ich früher einen Bauplan entworfen hatte, **ging** ich **jetzt** an diesen Brief heran.

(SW1)

In the way that I used to map out a construction plan in the past, I now approached my letter.

(SW1TE)

87. Bereits einige Tage vor dem deutschen Einmarsch am **22. Juni 1941** gab es Radiosendungen in ukrainischer Sprache, die die Ankündigung der baldigen Befreiung Galiziens mit folgendem Appell verbanden: "Empfangt uns nicht mit Blumen, sondern mit abgehackten Judenköpfen."

(SW1)

A few days before the German invasion of 22 June 1941 there were some broadcasts in Ukrainian which combined the announcement of Galicia's imminent liberation with this appeal: "Welcome us not with flowers but with severed Jewish heads."

(SW1TE)

88. Als **1944** die Russen kamen, **fanden** sie in den Trümmern der Brandruine die verkohlten Skelette.

(SW1)

When the Russians returned in 1944 they found the charred skeletons in the debris.

(SW1TE)

89. **Als sie siebzehn war, machte** sie den entscheidenden Sprung von hübsch zu schön, der dunkeläugigen Blondinen leichterfällt als helläugigen.

(HEB1)

At seventeen she made the crucial leap from pretty to beautiful that comes more easily to dark-eyed blondes than to light-eyed ones.

(HEB1TE)

90. **Nach mehreren Monaten kam** die Antwort: Man könne ihr nicht helfen, der Autor des Werks, Charles Fourier, sei bereits 1837 gestorben.

(ERH1)

Several months later an answer arrived: they could not be of help; the author of the work, Charles Fourier, had died in 1837.

(ERH1TE)

The first two sentences, 85 and 86 represent time adverbials that were very common in my English original material as well: *dann* ("then") and *jetzt* ("now"). The remaining hits, however, represent a lot of different time adverbials, indicating that an event or state took place in the past.

First of all, there are time adverbials that indicate an exact point of time, such as in 87, where the date itself is mentioned *am 22. Juni 1941*. The following examples, 88 and 89, also express defined points of time. In 88, the year, *1944*, is mentioned, while in 89 *als sie siebzehn war*, also indicates that one specific year is

being talked about. Example 90 shows that also vague time expressions can be found in the corpus material: *nach mehreren Monaten*. This expression does not give an exact point of time in the past, but simply states that is happened approximately some months later.

The examples shown here only represent a small number of the adverbials used in combination with the German preterite, since there are a lot of different ones. Only a very small number of them, e.g. *dann*, *jetzt/nun*, as mentioned above, *am Nachmittag* ("in the afternoon"), or *später* ("later") appears more than once in the corpus material relevant for my research. Thus, these results also agree with the statements in Chapter 2. According to Fabricius-Hansen (2009: 511), the preterite is used in German in combination with defining time adverbials.

4.3.2 German preterite expresses single events

In the next part, I will to have a look at some examples from each of the semantic categories, regularity, sequence and single events, before comparing the percentages found here with the results found for the English original preterite forms. Just like in the case of the English preterite, also the categories here often vague, such as in:

91. Wenn ich da an mein eigenes Land **dachte**, an die Bundesrepublik, stieg eine häßliche Regung in mir auf — der Neid.

(HME3)

When I thought of my own country, the Federal Republic of Germany, I experienced an ugly feeling of envy.

(HME3TE)

On the one hand, *dachte* can be regarded as a single event here, because this is a single thought. On the other hand, it can also be interpreted differently, stating that the thought comes first and is followed by the feeling of envy. In that case, it would be a sequence. As mentioned with concerning the English original preterite form, also when it comes to the German forms, the results might be influenced by some of these borderline cases.

Here are some of the sentences that I chose to put in the single events category:

92. [...] nachdem diejenigen meiner müßigen Schwestern und Brüder, denen Klatsch und Familienzwist gelegen **kam**, gewiß weidlich über mich hergezogen waren: Bevorzugt vor ihnen wollte ich sein, doch ihren Neid ertrug ich nicht.
(CW1)
[...]
After I was convinced that my idle brothers and sisters, some of whom liked gossip and family discord, had run me down to their heart's content. I wanted to be privileged above them all, but I could not bear to have them envy me.
(CW1TE)
93. Was war das für ein Brot, das man ihr **gab**, als sie die Erste Heilige Kommunion empfing (die letzte kirchliche Handlung, an der sie teilnahm), und wo, wo verflucht noch einmal blieb der Wein?
(HEB1)
What kind of bread was it they gave her at her First Holy Communion (the last religious activity in which she participated), and where, where for God's sake, was the wine?
(HEB1TE)
94. Als bald aber **geschah** etwas wahrhaft Erschütterndes: auf der fünften Stufe angekommen, machte die Wildgans plötzlich Halt, bekam, wie dies bei größerem Schrecken der Fall ist, einen langen Hals und nahm die Flügel fluchtbereit aus den Tragfedern.
(KOL1)
Upon this, something shattering happened: arrived at the fifth step, she suddenly stopped, made a long neck, in geese a sign of fear, and spread her wings as for flight.
(KOL1TE)
95. Seine Bemerkung überraschte mich nicht; denn die Wahlparty, zu der ich eingeladen war, **fand** im Hause eines bekannten Ideologen der Arbeiterbewegung statt, [...].
(HME3)
His remark did not surprise me.
The election party to which I had been invited was taking place in the Old Town of Stockholm in the apartment of a prominent intellectual in the working-class movement, [...].
(HME3TE)
96. Ich muß mich mit der Kirche gutstellen, mein kleiner Bruder, sagte sie, ich **fand** diesen Vorgang und was sie dazu zu sagen hatte, in höchstem Maße widerwärtig.
(TBE1)

I have to put myself in good standing with the church, my little brother,
she said.
I found this whole procedure and what she had to say about it highly
distasteful.
(TBE1TE)

97. Ich **nahm** mir vor, Kroupa zu suchen, um ihm für das, was er getan hatte,
zu danken und ihm meine Hilfe anzubieten, falls er sie brauchen sollte.
(SW1)

I determined to seek out Kroupa to thank him for what he had done and to
offer him my help in case he needed it.
(SW1TE)

98. Diese rundum enge Verbindung zwischen Ukrainern und Deutschen
machte ukrainische KZ-Häftlinge zwangsläufig zu einer Ausnahme.
(SW1)

This generally close connection between Ukrainians and Germans made a
Ukrainian concentration camp inmate an exception.
(SW1TE)

99. "Da drinnen möchten wir nicht sterben, oder?" **hörte** ich von einem
Vorbeigehenden oben auf dem Berg, wo es inzwischen so dunkel war, daß
der Sprecher ohne Gesicht blieb.
(PH1)

"We would n't want to die in there, would we?"
I heard a passerby saying; by then, it had grown so dark on the mountain
that the speaker was faceless.
(PH1TE)

A lot of the hits in the single event category are similar to examples 92 and 93.
Both of them express relative sentences. The first one is introduced by the
German relative pronoun *denen* and the second one by *das*. Examples 94 and 95
are of the same kind as the ones in the English originals including a preterite form
of *happened* or *took place*. In 94, *geschah* ("happened") introduces a single event
in the past that is described as "shattering". Example 95 also indicates a single
event in the past, in this case an election party that "took place". Sentence 96
expresses a different meaning of the word *finden*. As in English, the more mental
side of the verb is represented here, indicating what the narrator thinks of the
event. The remaining examples 97, 98 and 99 simply present single events

located in the past. Example 99 has a preterite form of *hören* and the verb is used right after the quoted direct speech.

Concluding, we can say that the German preterite forms expressing a single event do not differ significantly from their English counterparts. A lot of relative clauses can be found here, additionally also sub-clauses, i.e. clauses introduced by adverbs like *weil* or *dass* that add some additional information to the main clause. As in English, most examples of *geschah/passierte* and also *fand statt* express single events that happened only one time in the past. In German, 77,3% of the *geschah/passierte* hits are of that kind. Thus, German and English seem to behave similarly in this category. Fabricius-Hansen (2009: 511) states that the preterite in German is used in order to indicate situations completed in the past, just as the results above show.

4.3.3 German preterite indicates regularity

Moving on, there are only a few hits indicating regularity in my research material. That is why I will not present many of the examples here:

100. **Wenn er eingeladen war, nahm** er die Großmutter nicht mit, ihre Dummheit und ihr ewiges Gejammer waren ihm lästig.

(EC1)

Whenever he was invited anywhere, he never took Grandmother along; he could n't stand her stupidity and her continuous wailing.

(EC1TE)

101. In der Küche **machte** ich mir Frühstück wie **jeden Morgen**, dann ließ ich es stehen, weil man mit leerem Magen wahrscheinlich schneller schwimmt.

(JUB1)

In the kitchen I fixed my breakfast, as I did every morning, but I left it untouched, because one can probably swim faster on an empty stomach.

(JUB1TE)

102. **Zweimal im Jahr kam** auch ein Brief, in dem er selbstzufrieden Neuigkeiten aus seinem Berufsleben ausbreitete.

(DW1)

Twice a year he also wrote a letter, dwelling complacently on news from his professional life.

(DW1TE)

The examples chosen above clearly show the patterns that can be found in the regularity or repeated event category. Example 100 shows a rather vague indication of regularity. In German, it is only indicated by the adverb *wenn* ("whenever") and its syntax. In the English translation, the adverb *never* makes it even easier to grasp that this is not a single event being talked about, but a regular one. Sentences 101 and 102 give precise information on how often the events take place, i.e. *jeden Morgen* and *zweimal im Jahr*. The regularity aspect of the preterite in German was mentioned earlier and it is, according to d'Alquen (1997: 143), a characteristic of the German preterite.

4.3.4 German preterite indicates a sequence

Finally, I will present the results from the German originals that fall into the sequence category. Here are some of the hits:

103. Ein alter Mann **ging** von seiner Haustür zum Gartentor und zurück, wobei er auf dem Hinweg die Brille auswechselte und sich auf dem Rückweg den Puls befühlte.

(PH1)

An old man was walking from his house to his garden gate and back, changing his glasses on the way out and feeling his pulse on the way back.

(PH1TE)

104. Als Haintz diese Worte **hörte**, gesprochen mit einem Rumor himmlischen Donners, da juchzte er gellend auf, grub die Finger in den Boden und verdreckte das Angesicht mit Erde.

(ROS1)

When Haintz heard these words, echoing with divine thunder, he leaped to his feet and whooped, dug his fingers into the earth, and smeared his face with soil.

(ROS1TE)

105. Jedenfalls bog ich vor dem Spielhaus ab und stieg hinauf zu dem Höhenweg, der, mit einigem Auf und Ab, die Kuppe des langgestreckten Bergrückens nachzieht: das Einbiegen **geschah** ohne Entschluß, und zugleich dachte ich beiläufig: "So ist es nun entschieden."

(PH1)

Be that as it may, I turned off before reaching the house, and climbed up the road which, with occasional rises and falls, follows the long mountain ridge.

I did n't turn off as a result of any decision, yet I thought: "This decides it."

(PH1TE)

106. Im Laufe der nächsten Monate kühlte ihr Urteil ab, sie **fand** erst kleine Mängel, dann Tadelnswertes und gegen das Ende der erwähnten Periode ausgesprochen hassenswerte Eigenschaften an dem armen Mädchen, das dann schließlich, regelmäßig unter ganz großem Krach, fristlos entlassen wurde.

(KOL1)

In the course of the next few months her judgement cooled, she found small faults, then bigger ones, and towards the end of the stated period she discovered hateful qualities in the poor girl who was finally discharged without a reference, after a violent quarrel.

(KOL1TE)

107. Zum Glück sah ich bald zwei unserer größeren Mädchen, und da sie um nichts in der Welt ihre Richtung geändert hätten, **nahmen** sie mich in die Mitte und zogen mich rasch fort.

(EC1)

Luckily, I soon caught sight of two of our older girls, and since they would n't have changed directions for anything in the world, they thrust me between themselves and hastily pulled me along.

(EC1TE)

108. Ich hatte um den Schlüssel gebeten, doch er **gab** ihn mir nicht, er sagte, in diesen Tagen dürfe man wohl von mir verlangen, daß ich mich auf den Hintern setze und lerne.

(JUB1)

I asked him for the key, but he would n't give it to me, saying that right now it surely was n't too much to ask for me to stop fooling around and get down to some studying.

(JUB1TE)

The examples mentioned above all indicate that the preterite is used in order to indicate a sequence. For instance in sentence 106 several actions that occurred after one another are described. In this case, this is made even clearer by the use of adverbials. In the beginning of the sentence, *erst* ("first") indicates the starting point or rather the first thing happening, *dann* ("then") is used for the continuation and so is *gegen Ende* ("towards the end"), before concluding with *dann schliesslich* ("then finally"). As stated by Fabricius-Hansen (2009: 513), the preterite is the favored tense used in German when it comes to chronological stories. This statement is also supported by my findings.

4.3.5 German preterite forms can be considered given or new in context

Also in the case of the German preterite, the question arises to what extent the tenses referred to can be considered given or new in the context. As I did regarding the English preterite originals, I also chose a random sample here and had a look at a context of ten sentences before the respective hits. Since I had a look at 1099 examples here, I examined every 10th hit, leaving me with a total of 115 sentences. Surprisingly, the percentages here are exactly the same as in English, i.e. 67,8% indicate a new time, while in 32,2% of the examples, the time can be assumed known from the context. To begin with, here are some examples where a given time is expressed:

109. Er wurde zur **Frühschicht** eingeteilt, die morgens um sechs Uhr begann und die er manchmal nur ohne Frühstück und noch benommen vor Müdigkeit[...]
Dann **kam** ein Werkmeister vorbei und brüllte etwas gegen seine Ohrenschützer.
(DW1)

He was assigned to the **early shift**, which began at six o'clock in the morning and for which he sometimes arrived without any breakfast and still dazed with tiredness
[...]

Then a foreman **came** along and yelled something into his ear-muffs.
(DW1TE)

110. (P)
Seit langer Zeit war ich nicht mehr so froh, als ich die Tür zu unserer Haustür aufschloß und meine Mutter aus dem Schlafzimmer kommen sah. [...]Ich holte meine beiden Katzen zu mir ins Bett und kuschelte mich ein. Vor dem Einschlafen **dachte** ich noch: "Christiane, das ist nicht deine Welt.
(CF1)

(P)
I had n't been so pleased for a long time when I opened the door to our flat and saw my mother coming out of her bedroom.
[...]
I took my two cats to bed with me and snuggled down.
Before going to sleep I thought: "Christiane, that is n't your bag.
(CF1TE)

In example 109, seven sentences before the hit, which includes *kam* ("came"), it is indicated that he worked the early shift that day, starting from 6 a.m. This point of time makes the reader understand that the sentence where the hit of *kam*

appears did also take place that day, when he worked the early shift. In example 110, a sequence is expressed. The writer or speaker expressed several events that took place one evening and that is why the reader also understand that the hit of *dachte* (“thought”) took place the same evening. Thus, the hits found here seem to be very similar to the English ones, where also a sequence or a time adverbial that appears earlier in the context makes it possible for the reader to regard the time as given.

Finally, most of the hits indicate a new time, such as in:

111. Einmal lagen wir im Bett, als jemand sich an der Tür zu schaffen machte.
 Noch nie habe ich Martha so erleichtert gesehen wie in dem Augenblick, als sich herausstellte, daß es ein Einbrecher war.
 [...]
 (P)
 Hinter mir in der S-Bahn **hörte** jemand Nachrichten: der Zustand Walter Ulbrichts war unverändert ernst, und die verfluchten Franzosen hatten im Südpazifik wieder einmal ihre Wasserstoffbombe gezündet.
 (JUB1)

Once, we were lying in bed when we heard someone at the door trying to get in.
 Never have I seen Martha so relieved as when it turned out to be a burglar. I climbed out the window and, grasping a heavy stick, crept up to him from behind.
 [...]
 (P)
 Behind me in the interurban train, someone was listening to the news: Secretary-General Walter Ulbricht's condition was still serious, and those goddamn French had set off another of their hydrogen bombs in the South Pacific.
 (JUB1TE)

112. Da sie im **Jahre 1941** einmal drei Tage lang mit einem Berufsunteroffizier der Deutschen Wehrmacht verheiratet **war**, bezieht sie eine Kriegerwitwenrente, deren Aufbesserung durch eine Sozialrente noch aussteht. (HEB1)
 Because she was at one time, in 1941, married for three days to a noncommissioned officer in the regular German Army, she draws a war-widow's pension which has not yet been supplemented by a social security pension.
 (HEB1TE)

In example 111, there is no indication about the point of time when the situation took place in the context before and thus, the time can be assumed to be new to

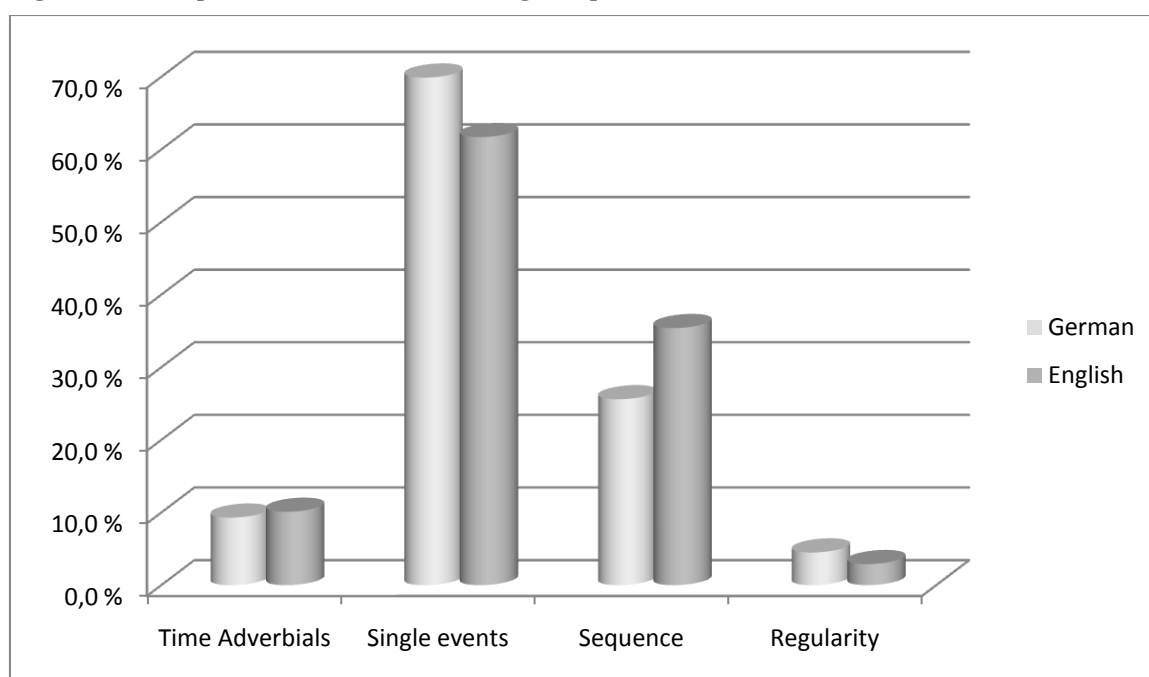
the reader. Additionally, the "(P)" indicates a new paragraph, which also supports the assumption that a new time is expressed here. Example 112 expresses the point of time, in this case *im Jahre 1941* ("in 1941"), in the same sentence. That is why the time referred to here can be interpreted as new to the reader and is introduced in the same sentence.

4.3.6 Conclusion and comparison of the German and English preterite

As mentioned several times before, the hits regarded in the investigation might have an impact on the results found, i.e. the fact that in some cases samples were chosen and sometimes all hits were included.

First of all, I will have a look at differences and similarities in the English and German original preterite forms. The following figure gives an overview:

Figure 2: Comparison German and English preterite use



First of all, the overall percentages in all the four categories are very alike. The formal category of time adverbials accounts for 9,3% of all sentences in German, while a time adverbial can be found in 10,1% of the cases in English. In English, 61,7% fall into the single event category compared to 69,9% in German. Also the regularity category is very similar: in German, 4,5% fall into that category compared to 2,9% in English. Finally, 25,6% of all the sentences in German

express a sequence, while 35,4% of all hits in the English originals do so. Thus, the numbers shown here are very similar.

Comparing the adverbials, both the English and the German originals show approximately the same percentage. The main difference here is that German uses a large variety of different time adverbials, as mentioned above, while the English adverbials are confined to a few, with *then* being the one used most often.

Looking at the semantic category of single events, the verbs seem to behave similarly in both English and German. To begin with, we can often find single events indicated as a relative clause. In German, sub-clauses, e.g. including *weil* or *dass*, are also very common in this context. Secondly, the semantics of the verbs in both languages are similar. Especially *happened* and *geschah/passierte* and *took place* and *fand statt* show the same pattern in both English and German. Looking at these verbs, single events are the most common category, which the verbs fall in and more than 70% of the instances including *happened* and *geschah/passierte* fit into this category.

When comparing the English and German original preterite forms with regard to regular or repeated events, English and German seem to behave similarly as well. English uses the preterite in 2,9% of all hits for indicating regularity, while German does so in 4,5% of the sentences. In both languages, we can find either time adverbials that express exactly how often the events or states occurred, such as *twice/zweimal im Jahr*, *every morning/jeden Morgen*, or others that express the regularity in a rather vague way. Referring to the latter pattern, here lies the main difference between the two languages in this category. While English always uses adverbs indicating regularity, such as *always* or *never*, German sometimes expresses that an event is regular only by the syntax or context within the clause, without adding an adverbial.

Finally, also the sentences that are part of the sequence category are very similar in English and German. To begin with, there are sentences where simultaneous actions or events are depicted. Moreover, several events can be mentioned after one another. Regarding both the English and the German original preterite verb forms such instances can be found frequently. To sum up, the frequencies of the

four categories are similar in both the English and the German originals. The same applies to the overall percentages of their occurrences.

4.4 The English translations

In 4.4, I am will examine how the German preterite forms were translated into English – do the translators choose the preterite form in English as well or are there any variations? Out of all the hits that present a German preterite verb form, 1009 were translated into English, such as in:

113. Wiederum auf der fünften Stufe angekommen, **blieb** sie stehen, sah sich um, schüttelte sich und grüßte, beides Verhaltensweisen, die man an Graugänsen regelmäßig sieht, wenn ein erlittener Schrecken der Beruhigung Platz macht.

(KOL1)

On the fifth step she **stopped** again, looked round, shook herself and greeted, behaviour mechanisms regularly seen in greylags when anxious tension has given place to relief.

(KOL1TE)

The following table shows how many of the hits were translated into which tense in English.

Table 6: English translations of the German original preterite forms included in the research

Tense	Number of hits	Percentage
Preterite	926	91,8%
Present perfect	4	0,4%
Past perfect	15	1,5%
Passive	12	1,2%
-ing clause	10	1,0%
Past progressive	34	3,4%
Present	7	0,7%
Future	1	0,09%

As mentioned before, both present and past passives are included in the category “passive”.

4.4.1 German preterite forms translated into preterite in English

The numbers stated here express the notion that there is not a lot of variation in the results. The fact that over 90% of all the hits were translated into the preterite in English makes it clear that this is by far the most common way of translating a German preterite form, as the following examples show:

114. Ich **blieb** danach noch eine Zeitlang draußen auf dem Dammweg,
[...]
(PH1)
Afterward I **lingered** for a while outside on the embankment road[...]
(PH1TE)
115. Am zweiten Tag **kamen** sie durch das Land der Singenden Bäume.
(ME1)
The second day they **passed** through the Singing Tree Country.
(ME1TE)
116. Da **gab** es dann eigentlich nichts mehr, wo wir hingingen, um aus
Gropiusstadt herauszukommen.
(CF1)
And then there **was n't** really anywhere we could go to get out of
Gropiusstadt.
(CF1TE)
117. In dem Jahr, in dem er mit ihr zusammen **war**, verlor er wieder den
Kontakt zu seinem Studium.
(DW1)
In the year they **were** together he again lost touch with his studies.
(DW1TE)
118. Wenn ich da an mein eigenes Land **dachte**, an die Bundesrepublik,
stieg eine häßliche Regung in mir auf — der Neid.
(HME3)
When I **thought** of my own country, the Federal Republic of Germany, I
experienced an ugly feeling of envy.
(HME3TE)
119. Meine Beziehung zur Gestapo ist eindeutig, ich **war** ihr Gefangener,
ihr Häftling und **war** beim Verhör.
(SW1)
My connection with the Gestapo **was** unambiguous: I was their prisoner,
their detainee, and I **underwent** interrogation.
(SW1TE)

In the first examples mentioned here, 114, 115 and 116, there are time adverbials involved that indicate a specific point of time in the past, namely *danach* ("afterwards"), *am zweiten Tag* ("the second day") and *dann* ("then") . As mentioned by Leech (2004: 13), English uses the preterite in cases like these. Also in example 117 a time adverbial is mentioned that makes it clear that the event is located in the past. However, in this case, the adverbial is not expressed in the same relative clause in which the German preterite form of *sein* appears. Still, *in dem Jahr* ("in the year") makes the reader understand that a year in the past is talked about.

Moving on, the remaining sentences, 118 and 119, also state past time events that make the use of a preterite verb form necessary in English. Leech (2004: 13) mentions that when it comes to the English preterite "one basic element of the meaning is: 'the happening takes place before the present moment'". Thus, the preterite has to be used in both English and German here.

4.4.2 Remaining hits in English translations

In the remaining tenses that are used in the translations represent a very low percentage between approximately 1-3% and thus, not as many examples as in the rest of the paper will be given. The second most common tense used in English is the past progressive, such as in:

120. In Wirklichkeit aber ist der "Kampf", an den Darwin **dachte** und der die Evolution vorwärts treibt, in erster Linie die Konkurrenz zwischen Nahverwandten.
(KOL1)

In reality, the struggle Darwin **was thinking** of and which drives evolution forward is the competition between near relations.
(KOL1TE)

According to Leech (2004: 19), the progressive aspect is used in English in order to indicate duration. This is what it also does in example 120. Here, it indicates that Darwin's thoughts lasted for a longer period of time in the past. However, it has to be kept in mind that the progressive aspect does not exist in German and thus, the preterite had to be used in German in this case instead.

Very often, different expressions are chosen in English in these cases or the translator simply interpreted the sentence differently and thus, the sentence was re-written. In the case of passive constructions, e.g., they usually replace the German preterite form when expressions including *man* ("one") are involved as in this example:

121. Jedenfalls muß er elendiglich über den Felsen gestürzt sein, denn man **fund** seinen Leib völlig entstellt im Geröll liegen, die Oberschenkel bis zum Knie in den Rumpf getrieben.

(ROS1)

But he must have fallen miserably over the cliff, for his body **was found** utterly unrecognizable in the scree, his thighs thrust into his torso to the knee.

(ROS1TE)

In this sentence, a German construction, the *man* construction, is replaced by a passive in English simply because of the fact that *one* is not very common in English narrations and it has a rather formal character. This example shows that variations in the translations mainly have to do with varying expression, i.e. translations are chosen that are more natural in English. The small numbers for present perfect, passive construction, past progressives, present tenses, past perfects, *-ing* clauses and the one future tense cannot serve as a background for drawing any final conclusion. Additionally, some of the verb forms found in the translations, especially the past progressives and the *-ing* clauses, do not exist in German at all. However, *-ing* clauses are often used in sentences like:

122. Was es dann hörte, war der schwarze Donner, der von seinem Herzen **kam**.

(ROS1)

What the child then heard was the black thunder **emanating** from his heart.

(ROS1TE)

123. Nur auf Fotos und in strengen Filmen war ich solchen Leuten bisher begegnet, nun saß er leibhaftig auf dem Bett und **machte** einen enttäuschend schwachen Eindruck.

(JUB1)

I had seen such people only in photos and grim movies, but now he was sitting as large as life on the bed, **looking** disappointingly feeble.

(JUB1TE)

In German, a relative clause is used in this sentence. However, English has the possibility to use an *-ing* clause, which gives the impression that the sentence is not as long and complicated as the German one. Thus, a new expression, in this case an *-ing* clause, is chosen in order to make sure that the translation does not sound clumsy. In examples like these, the *-ing* form is also used in order to express the “ongoing” aspect of the action, i.e. “events that were in progress or about to take place at some earlier time” (Biber et. al., 1999: 470). In example 123, the progressive aspect is made clear in German by adding the adverb *nun* (“now”), but as mentioned above, in English a verb form can also be chosen to express this aspect. To sum up, the preterite is the verb form that is most commonly used when translating German preterite tenses. The remaining hits all show very low percentages that mostly are used because different expressions are used in English or English has various other verb forms or constructions at its disposal that can be used instead.

4.4.3 Comparison translations

When comparing the German originals with the English translations, the most striking aspect is the fact that almost all German original preterite forms were also translated into preterite forms in English. Only a very small number, less than 10% of all translations, are translated into another form than the preterite. Additionally, the 10% are spread among seven different constructions, namely passive construction, past perfects, past progressive, present tense verb forms, *-ing* clauses, present perfects and one future expression, i.e. none of them seem to be a favored translation of the German preterite. Moreover, there are more options in English that the translator can choose from. In German, *-ing* clauses and past progressives do not exist, so it does not come as a surprise that some of the preterite forms were replaced by verb forms that do not exist in German at all. In some cases, the sentences were also re-written completely in order to make the sentence more idiomatic and in these cases, it does not come as a surprise that the tense used was replaced by a different one as well.

Also in German, most of the hits from the English original preterite verb forms were translated into a preterite form in German as well, in this case 86,3%. However, the second most common form used is the present perfect, which

appears in the translations in approximately 8% of the cases. It is very often chosen instead of the preterite in direct speech or narrations. This has to do with the fact that the preterite is almost not used in German spoken language and that is why it only seems to be natural that the translators replace the preterite forms with present perfect verb forms in German.

Finally, the remaining 6% of the German translations of the original English preterite forms are also spread among passives, subjunctives, present tenses and past perfects. In most of the cases, one of the verb forms just mentioned are simply more common in certain contexts in German or translations are chosen that make the use of a specific form necessary. Thus, the sentences were rewritten and a different verb form was used in the translation.

Chapter 5: The present perfect

Chapter 5 focuses upon the data involving the present perfect. In 5.1, the English original data of the present perfect, again from the En-Ge-No part of the OMC, will be examined. Moving on, the German translations of the English present perfect hits will be shown in 5.2. In 5.3, I will have a look at the German original hits including the present perfect. Finally, the English translations of the German original present perfect data will be examined in 5.4. At the end of 5.3, the German originals including present perfect verb forms and the English originals will be compared. The same applies to 5.4: At the end of the chapter, an overview will be given of how the German and the English translations of the present perfect verb forms can be described.

5.1 The English present perfect

After looking at the first of the two main ways of referring to past time events, the preterite, I will now have a look at the remaining one: the present perfect.

124. I 'm not always very good at saying what I mean, except at work, that is; I **'ve been** to Europe and the States but never to Nineveh and Distant Ophir; [...](JB1)

The above sentence shows a typical example for the use of the present perfect. In this case, the narrator states that he or she has been to Europe, but never to Nineveh and Distant Ophir. Thus, there is a clear connection to the present – in the here and now the speaker can state that he or she has been to Europe and the States, but until now, i.e. in the present, not to the other mentioned places.

To begin with, one of my main concerns was the question which verbs should be included in the research. In order to be consistent with the preceding chapters, I wanted to use the same verbs as in the rest of the paper. The numbers of hits that could be found in the corpus when only using the same verbs as in the rest of the thesis was not too high. In total, 230 sentences including the verbs *be*, *think*, *stay*, *come*, *go*, *take*, *happen*, *give*, *make*, *find*, *tell*, and *hear* in their present perfect tense form are in the OMC. In order to search for them, I entered "*'ve/has/have*" into the search engine of the corpus and additionally "and + 3 past participle", i.e. in the case of *make* for instance, I searched for "and +3 made". I did not include the

instances of “’s” because of the fact that most hits found did not represent the present perfect forms, but e.g. a present tense, such as in:

125. That 's quite a thought. (JB1)

Here, *thought* is not used as a past participle, but as a noun and the ‘s is a present tense form and does not have anything to do with the present perfect. On the one hand, the rather small number of hits can definitely be seen as a noteworthy result in itself. Overall, the present perfect form of these verbs does not seem to be as frequent as their preterite form. However, in order to be able to draw conclusions in my research, I decided to add more examples. First of all, I entered “’ve” into the search engine in combination with “and +3 *ed”. By doing so, I got all results that consist of ‘ve and a form ending in *-ed* three words after. I chose to add *-ed* because the regular past participle ending in English is *-ed*. Obviously, by doing so only the regular verbs are covered and the semantic variation among the verbs is very varied. A number of hits, more precisely the ones including *happened* and *stayed*, could be found both in this search string and in their own one that only included the two verbs. In these cases, the verb forms were only counted once. The following example shows a ‘ve form in combination with a past participle, thus it represents a present perfect form that is relevant for my search:

126. "What they 've **developed** — it 's called Lotromycin — has been used successfully on animals.
(AH1)

In total, 73 hits including ‘ve were relevant to my research. I also added “’ve/have/has and +3 done” to the list because of the fact that *do* has quite a number of present perfect hits in the English part of the OMC. Finally, I also entered “have/has” plus “and +3 *ed” into the search engine. There are a total of 552 hits, and I chose to use every 5th one, such as the following one:

127. The discovery that the outer reaches of the atmosphere are a part of planetary life in a like manner **has defined** the edge of our puzzle picture of the Earth.
(JL1)

Here, the verb *define* is used in the sentence. As with regard to the hits including ‘ve, also in this case there is a lot of semantic variation among the verbs appearing

in this part of the research. A lot of the hits found throughout my search for the present perfect consist of passive forms, such as:

128. Thalidomide **has been** widely **used** in Europe and elsewhere, and those taking it have included pregnant women."

(AH1)

Those have been disregarded in my paper, and thus, I concentrated on active present perfect forms. The following table shows an overview of how many hits were included in my research for the present perfect:

Table 7: Original present perfect forms in English included in the research

Verb in present perfect	Total number of hits	Number of hits regarded in research
<i>Have/has/'ve and +3 done</i>	52	32
<i>Have/has/'ve and +3 heard</i>	26	18
<i>Have/has/'ve and +3 told</i>	22	10
<i>Have/has/'ve and +3 given</i>	15	8
<i>Have/has/'ve and +3 made</i>	17	12
<i>Have/has/'ve and +3 taken</i>	14	11
<i>Have/has/'ve and +3 happened</i>	13	5
<i>Have/has/'ve and +3 come</i>	30	22
<i>Have/has/'ve and +3 gone</i>	19	10

<i>Have/has/'ve and +3 found</i>	16	10
<i>Have/has/'ve and +3 thought</i>	23	12
<i>Have/has/'ve and +3 stayed</i>	0	0
<i>Have/has/'ve and +3 been</i>	367	80
<i>'ve and +3 *ed</i>	80	73
<i>Have/has and +3 *ed</i>	552	51
<u>TOTAL</u>	1246	354

As the table shows, a total of 354 hits are part of my present perfect research with English originals. The hits used here can easier be compared directly than the ones regarding in the preterite researches since all hits of the verbs, besides the ones of “*have/has/'ve and +3 been*” and “*have/has and +3 *ed*”, are included.

5.1.1 Time adverbials used in combination with the English present perfect

First of all, there are a number of adverbials that can be found in combination with the present perfect. The main semantic aspect that all hits included here have in common is the fact that they have some kind of relation to the present point of time. This will be looked upon in 5.1.2, while 5.1.1 focuses on the formal aspect of time adverbials used in combination with the present perfect, just as the following example shows:

129. "Er, Diana and I **have n't discussed** it yet... er... on the one hand, one feels drawn to Mountbatten because of Uncle Dickie, but on the other, one also feels, er... well... er...."
(ST1)

Yet is only one of the adverbials that are often used together with the present perfect in English. In the material for my research taken from the OMC, the

following adverbials occurred with the present perfect: *before*, *already*, *never*, *ever*, *just*, *yet* and *since*. A number of these adverbs, namely *yet*, *still*, *already* and *before* are also mentioned by Leech (2004: 46) as typical adverbials occurring with the present perfect when expressing the sense “as early as now”. Also Hasselgård et.al. (2007: 185) state that especially *yet* and *already* can often be found in sentences containing a present perfect verb form in English. The following table shows the distribution of the various adverbials in my research:

Table 8: Distribution of adverbials in the English present perfect sentences included in the research

Adverb	Number of hits
never	20
ever	8
just	8
already	9
since	11
yet	4
before	8
TOTAL	68 ~ 19,2%

As the table shows, a total of 19,2% of all the hits include both a present perfect verb form and one of the mentioned adverbials. To begin with, *never* seems to be the adverbial most often used with the present perfect in English. Here are some examples from the corpus material:

130. I 've **never rhapsodized** about exercise and I 'd avoid it if I could, but I notice the older I get, the more my body seems to soften like butter left out at room temp.
[\(SG1\)](#)

131. We will go there, the body says, and there find the father whom we **have never met**[...]
(ROB1)
132. "I **'ve never heard** of Horsefield."
(BC1)
133. We **'ve never gone** to school for more than three or four months at a time anyway.
(MA1)
134. The fact is, I **'ve never been** very good at meeting people.
(JB1)
135. I know that these exist, having read about them in books, but I 've never had any girl friends because I **'ve never been** in one place long enough.
(MA1)

Looking at the examples, it is striking that most of the instances of *never* can be found in sentences with 've. This could be an indication that the use of *never* with the present perfect is common in spoken language. Unfortunately, the En-Ge-No part of the OMC does not make a research on this topic easy because it does not offer a part with spoken language only. However, for some further research, it might be useful, e.g., to include the spoken part of the BNC for British English or COCA for American English.

The fact that *never* is used with the present perfect in English is not surprising. As the examples above show, the adverbial relates the event described to the present tense. *Never* indicates in these cases that something has never occurred before, such as in the last example, where the speaker indicates that he has never had a girlfriend. By using *never* in the sentence in combination with the present perfect, the speaker is able to communicate that he did not have a girlfriend in the past and at the time of speaking he still does not have a girlfriend. The same applies to the second fact mentioned in the same sentence – he did not stay long enough in one place in the past and at the present time, he still does not do it.

There are also examples in the corpus material where the adverbial *already* is not expressed explicitly. However, in some of the German translations it is translated. Here are some of these examples from the corpus:

136. **Have I told** you my Theory of Life, by the way?

(JB1)

Habe ich dir übrigens **schon** meine Theorie über das Leben präsentiert?

(JB1TD)

137. How many meals **have you taken**, do you think, when there 's been something going on between your partner and A. N. Other that you have n't known about?

(FW1)

Was denken Sie, wie oft Sie **schon** mit einer Person beim Essen saßen, die etwas mit Ihrem Partner laufen hatte, ohne daß Sie davon wußten (oder wissen)?

(FW1TD)

In the first two examples, 136 and 137 the German translator chose to include *already*, i.e. *schon* in German. The first sentence could also have been *Have I already told you my Theory of Life, by the way?* and 137 *How many meals have you taken already...* By adding the adverb *already*, the meaning would have been the same and in the above mentioned examples it could easily have been inserted into the sentences.

Since is also often used in this context in order to indicate that an event started in the past and continues throughout the present. Leech (2004: 45) also states that *since* expressions can often be found in sentences where the present perfect is used in English. He states that "such phrases and clauses normally refer to a time period stretching up to 'now'". In these cases, *since* expresses when exactly the event started in the past:

138. "My bed **has n't been** empty **since Basil was born**," she said lightly, "and I do n't think anyone but me would put up with the way that boy kicks in his sleep."

(GN1)

139. "I **'ve been** amusing myself with sums and signs and stuff ever **since I was a kid**.
(ABR1)

140. They all know what it is, as we **have done since childhood**; but in my view no one has yet succeeded in defining life.
(JL1)

In 138, *since* does not state an exact point of time, but gives an indication that the speaker's bed has not been empty since Basil's birth. By using the present perfect, the speaker makes it clear that his or her bed was not empty in the past, starting with Basil's birth, which is indicated by the *since* expression, and it is still not empty in the present. The following two examples, 139 and 140 involve a more exact indication of when in the past time the states and events started. Both sentences refer to the speaker's childhood and they are still the same at the present point of time.

Finally, here are some examples including the remaining time adverbials, *just*, *ever*, *before* and *yet*, that could be found in combination with the present perfect:

141. The old Celts had a male god called Dommu, or "Depth of the Waters," and it is possible this god has been living in the spring to which the Wild Man **has just introduced** the boy.
(ROB1)

142. "That would be nice, mam, but you **have n't told** me **yet** what it 'll cost to stay here with our room and board."
(GN1)

143. People **have told** me that **before**.
(JB1)

144. I **'ve never fired** a gun in my life — Lord, I do n't think I **'ve ever seen** a gun.
(AT1)

The examples above all represent the use of a present perfect verb form in combination with an adverbial. Leech (2004: 46) mentions that *just* and *ever* can be found with both the preterite and the present perfect in English, while *yet* and *before* are more common in combination with the present perfect.

The fact that the above mentioned adverbials often occur together with the present perfect does not come as a surprise. Not only Leech (2004) and Hasselgård et.al. (2007) indicate that these adverbials are often found in combination with the present perfect, but also the *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (Biber et.al., 1999: 468) states that “adverbials indicating duration or a time period are used with the present perfect to mark the beginning point or the duration of the period of time, but rarely indicate the ending time (which is assumed to be the present)”. The grammar itself also mentions expressions with *since* and *already* in this context and those could also be found in my corpus material (Biber, et.al., 1999: 468). Thus, the adverbials found in my corpus material are the same ones that other writers mentioned earlier regarding the use of the present perfect in English.

5.1.2 English present perfect expresses relation to present point of time

As mentioned earlier, all present perfect verb forms express some kind of relation to the present time, without making it explicit by the use of additional adverbs. They express situations that have an impact on the present point of time. Hasselgård et.al. (2007: 184) state that the present perfect establishes a connection between a situation in the past and the present moment of speaking or writing and also Biber et.al. (1999: 460) characterize the use of the present perfect in the same way.

145. "My family **have given** years of devoted service to this country, my mother in particular...."

(ST1)

The above mentioned example, 145, represents a typical example in this category. By using the present perfect here, the speaker conveys that the state, in this case the fact that the family gives devoted service to that country, started sometime in the past and continues in the present time, i.e. the family still gives devoted service to the country.

To begin with, there are examples where a longer period of time is indicated that continues throughout the present time, as also mentioned by e.g. Greenbaum (1996: 270) or Leech (2004: 45). This use of the present perfect can be seen in the following examples from the OMC:

146. I spent four years in medical school, another five being an intern and resident, I **'ve been** in practice ten years, and while I do n't know everything, I know so much more than you it is n't funny.
(AH1)
147. He 's my landlord and **has been** for nearly two years.
(SG1)
148. Those bacteria **have been** with Gaia for nearly four thousand million years, [...]
(JL1)
149. In the last few millennia we **have made** the most astonishing and unexpected discoveries about the Cosmos and our place within it, explorations that are exhilarating to consider.
(CSA1)
150. We **have** always **found** that New Year's Eve, with its eleventh-hour excesses and doomed resolutions, is a dismal occasion for all the forced jollity and midnight toasts and kisses.
(PM1)

The three first examples, 146, 147 and 148 all consist of a present perfect verb form and an expression, i.e. *ten years* and an expression with *for*, that indicates the length of the event or state, which continues in the present time and possibly also in the future.

Moving on, 149 is quite similar and it states that the most astonishing discoveries about the Cosmos have been made within *the last few millennia*. By using this expression, it is made clear that these discoveries were made in the last few millennia, but there are still discoveries in the present time as well.

Finally, the last sentence, 150, includes a present perfect verb form and *always*. By using *always* here it is indicated that the speaker thought his/her whole life that New Year's Eve was a dismal occasion. The present perfect that occurs here explains that the speaker still is of the same opinion at the present point of time.

The examples mentioned here do not convey that the states continue only throughout the past and the present point of time, but will probably go on in the future as well. Looking at the first example for instance, it is not stated that the speaker will stop being in practice in the present, but he will most likely also be a

doctor in the future. This pattern can be applied to all the remaining sentences above as well. Thus, Rothstein's assumptions (2008: 29) that the English present perfect does not have a futurate use cannot be supported by the findings in my research. Leech (2004: 39), on the other hand, states that the present perfect can continue in the future, when it describes a "state-up-to-the-present", such as in 147, or a "habit-in-a-period-leading-up-to-the-present", as in example 146.

Furthermore, the present perfect is very often used in a rather resultative way in my corpus material, i.e. the event or state that took place in the past has an impact on the present time, which often is visible. Leech (2004: 39) mentions that "the present perfect is also used in reference to a past event to imply that the result of that event is still operative at the present time". Here are some examples from the OMC that fit into this category:

151. The ensuing mélange of tastes and aromas pleased him profoundly, as did the blue tracery of smoke above the white linen tablecloth, [...] without those deep indentations that afflict the man who **has gained** weight or age, [...].
(AB1)

152. "You **'ve**... you **'ve**... you **'ve dyed** it!" shrieked the mother.
(RD1)

153. You **'ve stocked** the pool with barracuda and put a tank trap in the drive?
(PM1)

154. "You **have given** me a description.
(OS1)

155. Of course the phrase **has gone** out of fashion.
(FW1)

156. At least something good **has come** out of this bloody shambles.
(ST1)

157. But just then he came back and said, "They say they **'ve called** it a day.
(DL2)

In the first four sentences, 151, 152, 153 and 154 the results themselves are actually visible to the eye, e.g. 151 describes a man who has gained weight and age, thus he is stouter and older at the present point of time. All these sentences express states that can be proved simply by showing the item or person being talked about.

The following three sentences, 155, 156 and 157, also represent examples that have an influence on the present time or have some kind of validity for the present. However, in contrast to the examples just mentioned, they cannot be identified physically. 155 explains that a phrase has gone out of fashion. By using the present perfect here, the speaker makes it clear that the phrase is still not in fashion in the present, thus a connection to the present is established by the choice of the present perfect verb form. Finally, in 157, the speaker states that they called it a day, thus the present perfect verb form here indicates that it is over in the present moment.

Concluding, we can say that all the examples presented here show some relation to the present point of time and some of them are even physically visible as e.g. the dyed hair. The results found here support both Rothstein's (2008: 111) and Leech's (2004: 39) characterizations that the present perfect has a resultative aspect. As we have seen with the sentences including expressions that indicate time periods, also the examples here started in the past, continue throughout the present and can even have an impact on the future as well.

Finally, some of the sentences in my corpus material from the OMC included *now*. Here are some of the corpus hits:

158. And **now** you '**ve changed** your mind."
(MW1)

159. **Now** I '**ve reached** the place where we used to get off the streetcar, stepping into the curbside mounds of January slush, into the grating wind that cut up from the lake between the flat-roofed dowdy buildings that were for us the closest thing to urbanity.
(MA1)

The sentences consist of the adverb *now* in combination with the present perfect. The Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English states that *now* normally

is used in combination with the present perfect in order to express a contrast between the past and the present point of time (Biber, et.al., 1999: 468). Also Leech (2004: 45) states that the present perfect can be found in combination with *now* in English. According to him, it then marks “the end point of the period of time during which a particular happening has taken place”. In 158 for instance, *now* expresses the contrast between the past tense, where the addressee seems to have had a different opinion and the present where he or she has changed his or her mind. The fact that *now* often is used together with the present perfect does not come as a surprise. It simply emphasizes the fact that the present perfect establishes a connection to the present tense. In some of the cases, *now* is translated in German, even though it is not expressed explicitly in English:

160. Gold all over the world symbolizes sun-glory, royal power, self-generating radiance, freedom from decay, immortality, spiritual luminosity, and it is that gold which **has come** to the boy's finger.

(ROB1)

In der ganzen Welt symbolisiert Gold den Glanz der Sonne, königliche Macht, inneres Leuchten, Schutz vor Verfall, Unsterblichkeit, geistige Brillanz, und dieses Gold **haftet jetzt** am Finger des Jungen.

(ROB1TD)

5.1.3 Main or sub-clauses in the English originals

Most of the hits including the English present perfect are main clauses. Out of the 354 hits, 259 are main clauses, i.e. 73,2% of all hits. This number is very similar to the percentage of main clauses in the sentences including preterite forms in the English originals, where a total of 75,2% represented main clauses. However, in order to draw conclusion here, it would be necessary to look at the overall distribution of main and sub-clauses in English. Nevertheless, I will mention some of the main characteristics of the main and sub-clauses in this chapter and I will also look at the percentages presented here in comparison with the hits in the German originals. Here are some hits presenting main clauses in English:

161. During the few years of domesticity the urge to be alone **has** already **taken** hold of him.

(ABR1)

162. In exploring the question, "What is life?" we **have made** some progress.

(JL1)

163. Those working with alcoholic families in the last ten years **have made** much of the word denial, and it is a good word.
(ROB1)

The hits that contain a main clause are most of the times very straightforward, such as the first two hits presented above. Additionally, there are a number of sentences where two main clauses appear together and are combined, e.g. by the use of *and*, such as in the last sentence above.

Moving on, here are some of the hits that contain a subordinate clause:

164. Gold all over the world symbolizes sun-glory, royal power, self-generating radiance, freedom from decay, immortality, spiritual luminosity, and it is that gold **which has come** to the boy's finger.
(ROB1)
165. Celia said seriously, "The time is coming, in fact it 's already here, **when** women will do many things they **have n't done** before."
(AH1)
166. Now, Stuart, as you will discover **if** you **have not done** so already, believes that the principal raison d'être of food is to conceal from public view the hideous pattern on the plate beneath.
(JB1)

Most of the hits that can be found in a subordinate clause occur in relative clauses. In 164, the relative pronoun, in this case *which*, is expressed explicitly. However, there are also cases just like 165, where the relative pronoun is not mentioned. However, it would be possible to re-write the sentence with a relative pronoun: "[...] when women will do many things *that* they haven't done before". In addition to the relative clauses subordinate clauses including *if* or other conjunctions can be found here. However, as mentioned above, the percentage for subordinate clauses is rather low and accounts for only 26,8% of all the hits.

5.1.4 Reference to given or new time in English originals

Finally, it is striking that almost all sentences including a present perfect form in English refer to a new time and not back to one mentioned earlier. When looking at the context of each sentence, i.e. five sentences before the hit, a total of 95,8% introduce a new time and only 4,2% refer to an old or given time. A lot of the hits

that express old time reference could be found in the hits of *have/has/’ve done*, but also a few other ones:

167. [...] **An hour earlier** Townsend had told Andrew, "You **'ve done** all you can.
(AH1)

168. [...] "She 's not herself **today**.
I **'ve given** her a couple of aspirin.
(AB1)

In 167, *an hour earlier* in the clause right before the hit indicates the point of time, which seems to have been an hour earlier. Looking at the second example, 168, the point of time is indicated in the sentence right before the hit itself. Here *today* indicates the point of time and thus, the time is already given in the sentence where the hit appears. Moving on, here are some of the hits that express a new time:

169. [...] I went after him for the money and the next thing I knew, I was caught up in events I still have n't quite recovered from.
(P)
My name is Kinsey Millhone.
I 'm a private investigator, licensed by the state of California, operating a small office in Santa Teresa, which is where I **'ve lived** all my thirty-two years.
(SG1)

170. (P)
I have a husband, not my first, whose name is Ben.
He is not any sort of an artist, for which I am thankful.
He runs a travel agency, specializing in Mexico.
Among his other sterling qualities are cheap tickets to the Yucatan.
The travel agency is why he **has** n't **come** with me on this trip: the months before Christmas are a hectic time in the travel business.
(MA1)

171. (P)
"Alice — I told you," said Jasper.
(P)
"Comrade Alice," said Bert.

His voice was curt, stern and pure, insisting on standards, and Jasper's voice fell into step.

"We **have** just **come**," he said.

(DL2)

172. We **have** always **found** that New Year's Eve, with its eleventh-hour excesses and doomed resolutions, is a dismal occasion for all the forced jollity and midnight toasts and kisses.

(PM1)

In 169 and 170 above, the time itself is indicated clearly in the sentence where the present perfect verb form appears. 169 presents the expression *thirty-two years* in order to refer to the past tense, while *the month before Christmas* is the point of time in the second sentence. Moving on, 171 does not have a context before the sentence itself, so it must be a new time expressed here. In 172 *just* is used to make it clear that a new time that has never been mentioned before is being talked about and in the last sentence, *now* has the same function. The fact that most of the present perfect hits indicate a new time can be explained by various factors. To begin with, as mentioned earlier, a lot of them are part of spoken language and the dynamics involved in direct speech introduce new facts, or in some cases points of times, continuously. Additionally, in most of the hits found in the OMC, the point of time in the past remains unrevealed, i.e. the reader never finds out exactly when one action started in the past, such as in:

173. Let 's&pron; just say coincidence, and remind ourselves that the trouble at Harrix and in the Harris household long predated this particular event.

Except of course God may send his punishments retrospectively.

We may all of us be being punished *now* for sins we are about to commit.

Time may not be as linear as we suppose.

(P)

"What **have** I **done**?" asked Natalie, pretty white sinful hand, used to exploring Arthur's chest hairs, to her mouth.

(FW1)

Here, the reader understands that the speaker did something in the past, however, we do not find out when. Thus, in a lot of the instances that contain a present perfect verb form in English, the reader never finds out at what point of time the action, state or event started and that is why a new time is introduced in

these cases. The only time that always becomes clear in the hits is the relation to the present time, however, that is not often expressed explicitly.

5.1.5 Summary of English present perfect use

Concluding, we can say that the main characteristic of the present perfect is that a relation to the present time is established when the tense is used in English, as it is also mentioned by e.g. Greenbaum (1996: 270) or Hasselgård et.al. (2007: 184). The sentences in which the present perfect is chosen often express states or events that started in the past, continue in the present tense and sometimes even in the future. Thus, the time span reaches from the past time, throughout the present all the way to the future, and does not, as mentioned by Rothstein (2008: 29), stop at the present point of time.

Additionally, a number of the hits found represent spoken language. The fact that the present perfect often refers to events or states that have an impact or a relation to the present point of time can explain this finding. In spoken language, the speaker often tells about incidents that have just happened or have something to do with the point of speaking. That is why the present perfect is often used in these cases. Most of the hits here are main clauses and in almost all cases the point of time presented can be assumed new rather than given.

5.2 The German translation of the English present perfect forms

In this chapter, I will have a look at the German translation of the English present perfect forms that were presented in 5.1, such as:

174. Paul **has** just **turned** fourteen when Aunt Katrien (sorry, Cathérine) announces her visit.

(ABR1)

Paul **ist** gerade vierzehn **geworden**, als Tante Katrien (Verzeihung, Cathérine) Ihren Besuch ankündigt.

(ABR1TD)

Here, the present perfect form in the English original was also translated into a present perfect form in its German translation. In total, 348 of the English present perfect forms were translated into German. The following table gives an overview how often they were translated into the various tenses.

Table 9: German translations of the English original present perfect forms included in the research

Tense	Number of hits	Percentage
Present perfect	255	73,3%
Present tense	48	13,8%
Preterite	28	8,0%
Passive construction	8	2,3%
Subjunctive	7	2,0%
Past perfect	2	0,6%

Again, it has to be borne in mind that both past and present forms of the passive are included in the category “passive construction” and the same applies to the subjunctive.

5.2.1 Present perfect used in German translations

The table above shows clearly that the present perfect seems to be the favored verb form in German when it comes to translating English present perfect verb forms, making up almost 75% of all translations. Here, some of the hits are presented:

175. The fact is, I **'ve** never **been** very good at meeting people.

[\(JB1\)](#)

Tatsache ist, es **ist** mir nie sehr **leichtgefallen**, Leute kennenzulernen.

[\(JB1TD\)](#)

176. "I **'ve** already **explained** to your son," he said.

[\(ST1\)](#)

"Das **habe** ich bereits Ihrem Sohn **erläutert**", sagte er.

[\(ST1TD\)](#)

177. "I **'ve** **telephoned** to say that it 's on its way, so she 'll be expecting you.

[\(PDJ3\)](#)

"Ich **habe** ihr das mit den Korrekturbögen schon telephonisch **mitgeteilt**. Sie erwartet Sie also.

[\(PDJ3TD\)](#)

178. I **'ve noticed** that most people over the age of forty whinge like a chainsaw about their memory not being as good as it used to be, or not being as good as they wish it were.

(JB1)

Mir **ist aufgefallen**, daß die meisten Leute über Vierzig herumjaulen wie die Kettensägen, ihr Gedächtnis sei nicht mehr das, was es mal war, oder nicht so gut wie sie es gern hätten.

(JB1TD)

179. But there are no trilobites alive today; there **have been** none for 200 million years.

(CSA1)

Seit zweihundert Millionen Jahren aber **sind** sie völlig von der Erdoberfläche **verschwunden** — wie eine ganze Reihe weiterer urtümlicher Pflanzen und Tiere.

(CSA1TD)

180. Fused males **have** not **evolved** in all species.

(SJG1)

Verwachsene Männchen **haben** sich nicht in jeder Art **entwickelt**.

(SJG1TD)

181. Ralls further reminds us that since blue whales are the largest animals that **have ever lived**, and since females surpass males in baleen whales, the largest individual animal of all time is undoubtedly a female.

(SJG1)

Weiterhin erinnert uns Ralls daran, dass Blauwale die grössten Tiere sind, die jemals **gelebt haben**, und da bei den Bartenwalen die Weibchen die Männchen an Grösse übertreffen, ist das grösste Einzeltier aller Zeiten zweifelsohne ein Weibchen.

(SJG1TD)

As mentioned above, a lot of the English original hits including a present perfect verb form are taken from spoken language. That is why most of the hits are translated into a present perfect form in German as well because this is the form most commonly used in German spoken discourse, as stated by Fabricius-Hansen (2009: 514) and Hennig (2000: 180). This pattern is also represented by the examples mentioned above. Examples 175, 176, 177 and 178 consist either of direct speech or they have a 1st person narrator and that is why the present perfect is used in German in these cases.

Example 179 includes a *for* expression in English. As in English, German can also use the present perfect in order to establish a connection to the present or to indicate that an event or state also continues in the present or future, as also mentioned by Rothstein (2008: 32). In this example, it is expressed that there were no trilobites in the past and there still are none today and thus, the present perfect is used in German as well. Here, it is also possible that the sentence has a forward spread, i.e. that there will be none in the following years either. The following example, 180, is about fused males that have evolved. Again, the present perfect is used here in German as well because of the fact that the fused males evolved in the past and that is why they are still there in the present as well.

Finally, the adverb *even* or *jemals* in German in the last sentence above, 181, also establishes a connection to the present time. Blue whales are the largest animals that existed in the past, that live in the present and probably will be there in the future as well. As in the other hits mentioned in this context, the present perfect is used in German in order to express the continuation from the past, throughout the present and stretching into the future as well.

An interesting verb in this context is *be* or *sein* in German:

182. We usually get together on Wednesday nights, but our pastor **has been** down with the flu this week, so the meeting was postponed.

(SG1)

Normalerweise treffen wir uns mittwochs abends, aber diese Woche **liegt** unser Pfarrer mit Grippe im Bett, und deshalb ist das Treffen verschoben worden.

(SG1TD)

As mentioned by Fabricius-Hansen (2009: 514), this is one of the few verbs that are mainly used in the preterite in German, or in the present as in the example mentioned above, and does not occur very often in the present perfect. The verb could be found 80 times in my sample of the English originals and 79 out of those hits were translated into German. Looking at the distribution of the tenses in their translations, it is striking that 36, i.e. a total of 45,6% were translated into the present perfect, even though, as mentioned above, the present perfect is rather rare when it comes to this specific verb. Of the remaining hits, 17 were translated

into the present tense, i.e. 21,5%, 20 into the past tense, i.e. 25,3%, three into a subjunctive form (3,8%), two into a passive construction (2,5%) and finally one hit into the past perfect (1,3%).

When looking at the German original form of the verb *sein*, it only appears 28 times in its present perfect forms, i.e. *bin/bist/ist/sind/seid gewesen*, in the OMC. The number in the German translations of the English originals was higher than that though, with a total of 36 hits. This might be an indication of translationese, i.e. that the translators overuse the present perfect form of *sein*, even though it is not very common in the German language. The present tense of *sein* (*bin/bist/ist/sind/seid*), however, can be found 3000 times in the German originals and the past tense, i.e. *war/warst/waren/wart*, appears 2817 times in the Ge-En-No part of the OMC. Comparing the percentages here, the present tense occurs in 51,3% of the cases, the past tense in 48,2% of all the hits and the present perfect in only 0,5% of all the sentences. These numbers show clearly that the distribution among the German translations of the English present perfect form is not the same as the one in the German originals. In order to figure out whether the translators could have chosen the preterite or present in these cases, the examples themselves have to be taken into consideration. Here are some of the sentences where the present perfect was used in the German translation as well:

183. "Have they been?"

(DL2)

"Sind sie hier gewesen?"

(DL2TD)

184. I 'm not always very good at saying what I mean, except at work, that is; I 've been to Europe and the States but never to Nineveh and Distant Ophir[...] (JB1)

Ich kann nicht immer sehr gut sagen, was ich meine, das heißt, außer bei der Arbeit; ich bin in Europa gewesen und in den Staaten, aber nie in Ninive und im Fernen Ophir; [...] (JB1TD)

185. But have you ever been there — to Pearl Harbor?"

(AH1)

Bist du schon mal dort gewesen — in Pearl Harbor?"

(AH1TD)

186. It is to be hoped that the members of the ex-Royal Family will integrate themselves into their local community, find employment and become useful members of society — something they **have not been** for many hundreds of years.

(ST1)

Es bleibt zu hoffen, daß die Mitglieder der Ex-Königsfamilie sich in ihrer neuen Umgebung einleben, Arbeit finden und zu nützlichen Mitgliedern der Gesellschaft werden — etwas, das sie jahrhundertlang nicht **gewesen sind**.

(ST1TD)

In all the examples mentioned above, the use of the preterite would have been possible as well instead of expressing the actions by a present perfect verb form. The translators might have been influenced in some of the cases because of the fact that the sentences represent direct speech and in spoken language, German prefers the present perfect. However, *sein* is the only exception in this case. Concluding, we can say that it looks like the translators often chose the present perfect when translating English present perfect instances of *be*, even though it would also be a possibility to use the preterite in these cases.

5.2.2 Present used in German translations

In total, 48 English present perfect verb forms were translated into the present tense in German, 17 of them include the verb *sein*. Here are some of these sentences:

187. We **have heard** so far the voice of life on one small world only.

(CSA1)

Bis jetzt **kennen** wir zwar nur die Stimme des Lebens auf einer einzigen kleinen Welt.

(CSA1TD)

188. Artists have infested it; in fact the first wave of artists **has** almost **come** and **gone**, and brass lettering and heating pipes painted fire-engine red and firms of lawyers are taking over.

(MA1)

Künstler haben sich hier eingenistet; tatsächlich **ist** die erste Künstlerwelle fast vorbei, und es machen sich schon Messingbriefkästen und bemalte Heizrohre, rot wie Feuerlöscher, und Anwaltskanzleien breit.

(MA1TD)

189. Our father **has changed** his job: this explains things.

(MA1)

Das erklärt alles.
Unser Vater **hat** einen neuen Beruf.
(MA1TD)

190. How long **have** you **been** in the Army?"
(ST1)

Wie lange **dienen** Sie bereits in der Armee?"
(ST1TD)

191. Since James Hutton there **has been** a "loyal opposition" of scientists who doubted the conventional wisdom that the evolution of the environment is determined by chemical and physical forces alone.
(JL1)

Seit James Hutton **gibt** es eine "loyale Opposition" von Wissenschaftlern, die die konventionelle Lehre anzweifeln, daß die Evolution der Lebensumwelt allein auf chemischen und physikalischen Kräften beruhe.
(JL1TD)

192. "You **'ve been** terribly kind," said Diana.
(ST1)

"Das **ist** wirklich außerordentlich freundlich von Ihnen", sagte Diana.
(ST1TD)

In the first example 187, the expression *so far* is used in the English sentence and also in the German translation. This adverb clearly indicates that there is a relation to the present point of time and in this case, the translator chose to use the present tense in German instead. By doing so, the focus is shifted more towards the present tense than the past. It would also have been possible to use the present perfect in this sentence, but then, the main focus would have been on both the past and the present.

The last three examples, 190, 191 and 192 all include a form of *be* in the English originals. In the first of these sentences, the English question, which is formed by using a present perfect verb form, indicates that the addressee is still in the army. The question word *how long* or *wie lange* in German makes it clear that the state started in the past and that is why the connection between the past and the present tense is established in the German translation by the question word on the one hand and the present tense verb form on the other hand. In the following sentence, the relation to the past is made clear by the *since* or *seit* expression and

the connection to the present is expressed by using a present tense verb form in German.

Examples 190 and 191 are very interesting examples that show the different use of tenses in English and German. Since we have a *since* expression in these sentences, the present perfect has to be used in English. In German, however, the use of the present tense works perfectly fine, but it would not be possible to use it in English as well. Thus, this is a special case where the use of the present tense is possible in German but not in English.

In order to explain the last example mentioned above, it is necessary to have a look at its context. The few sentences before explain that the addressee told Diana that she could knock at their door whenever she needs any help. Thus, they did not do something in the past that was very kind, but the offer is still valid at the present moment and that is why a present verb form is used here. The fact that the present tense was chosen in order to replace the English original present perfect form seems to be an expected solution since a connection to the present is established by doing so.

5.2.3 Preterite used in German translations

Moving on, here are some of the hits from my corpus material where the present perfect in English was replaced by a preterite form in German. In total, 28 of all the translations represent a preterite verb form, a high number of them, i.e. 20, are translations of the verb *be*:

193. In recent times, some interesting insights **have come** from the investigations of Ilya Prigogine and his colleagues into the thermodynamics of eddies, vortices, and many other transient systems that are low in entropy.

(JL1)

In jüngster Zeit **gewann** man interessante Erkenntnisse über die Thermodynamik von Strudeln, Wirbeln und vielen anderen kurzlebigen, schwach entropiehaltigen Systemen durch die Untersuchungen von Ilya Prigogine und seinen Mitarbeitern.

(JL1TD)

194. The geologic record seems much more in accord with the view that the organisms that are better able to compete **have come** to dominate, and that the Earth's near surface environment and processes have

accommodated themselves to changes wrought by biological evolution.
(JL1)

Die Erkenntnisse aus der Geologie deuten eher darauf hin, daß sich die leistungsfähigeren Organismen **durchsetzten** und daß sich die Lebensumwelt und die Prozesse nahe der Erdoberfläche den durch die biologische Evolution ausgelösten Veränderungen anpaßten.
(JL1TD)

195. "You **'ve been** so kind, Mr and Mrs Threadgold," she said.
(ST1)

"Das **war** wirklich überaus liebenswürdig von Ihnen, Mr. und Mrs. Threadgold", sagte sie.
(ST1TD)

196. "How long **have you been** married?"
(SG1)

"Wie lange **waren** Sie verheiratet?"
(SG1TD)

197. He added, with rare impatience, "You **'ve been** right about a lot of things, but not this time."
(AH1)

Er schüttelte ungeduldig den Kopf.
"Du **hattest** bisher in vielen Dingen recht, diesmal aber nicht."

The first two examples above 193 and 194 seem to be taken from a rather scientific context. The fact that the present perfect is more common in spoken than in formal written language explains why the preterite is used in the German translation here instead of keeping the same verb form as in the English original sentence.

The following three examples, 195, 196 and 197 include the present perfect form of *be* and as stated by Fabricius-Hansen (2009: 514), the verb *sein* in German is more common in the preterite or present tense than in the present perfect. In 195, the context has to be taken into consideration. As mentioned earlier, the present perfect form of *sein* is not common in German and thus, the question arises whether the present tense or the preterite has to be used here. When reading 15 sentences before the sentence mentioned above, it becomes clear that Mr. and Mrs. Threadgold already did a favor to the speaker, in this case the Queen,

i.e. the favor lies in the past. That is why the translator used the preterite form in the German translation.

The following sentence, 196, conveys a different meaning in German than in the English original. The present perfect form in English *have been married* indicates that the addressee is still married and might also be married in the future. By using the preterite in the German translation here, it is expressed that the addressee was married, but is not married anymore at the present point of time. Thus, this might be seen as a case of mistranslation. Finally, 197 includes also a preterite form in the translation and the present relation that is established in the English original by using the present perfect is conveyed here by adding *bisher*, “until now”.

5.2.4 Remaining hits and their German translations

The remaining few percent, in total a bit less than 5%, of all hits were translated into a passive construction, a subjunctive or a past perfect form. First of all, the percentages here are very low and thus, it is rather difficult to draw final conclusions. Secondly, the question arises whether the use of these verb forms was an active choice by the translator against the present perfect in German or whether the expressions used in the sentences simply required a different verb form in German. In my corpus material, the latter is the case, such as in:

198. It turns out that all of us are carriers, as people may have in their bloodstreams a disease that may or may not manifest itself in them but will be passed on; it **has come** to him in spite of all he has emancipated himself from so admirably — oh yes, I did, I do admire my father.

(NG1)

Es zeigt sich, daß wir alle Träger sind, wie Menschen, die eine Krankheit im Blut haben, die nicht unbedingt bei ihnen selbst zum Ausbruch kommen muß, die sie aber weitergeben; sie **wurde** an ihn **weitergegeben**, trotz allem, wovon er sich auf so bewundernswerte Weise befreit hat — o ja, ich bewundere meinen Vater, habe ihn immer bewundert.

(NG1TD)

In 198, the direct translation by using the present perfect in German as well, i.e. *es ist zu ihm gekommen*, sounds awkward and by replacing the expression by a different one including a passive construction, the sentence appears to be more natural for the German language.

5.2.5 Summary of the German translations and comparison with the English originals

First of all, the majority of the English present perfect forms, i.e. 73,3%, were translated into the present perfect in German as well. Moreover, a present tense form was used in 13,8% of the cases, i.e. also in these cases the close relation to the present time was maintained. The remaining few percent were translated into some preterite forms, passive constructions, subjunctives and past perfects. In the case of the preterite forms, *sein* was the verb most often used. Since *sein* normally does not appear in a present perfect form in German, it is not surprising that the preterite was chosen in a number of cases instead.

When looking at the translations of the English present perfect into German, it is important to keep in mind what was mentioned in the introduction about the present perfect by e.g. Rothstein (2008: 24) and Hennig (2000: 29). The boundaries between the preterite and the present perfect in German have become somewhat blurred. Especially in spoken language, the present perfect has taken almost completely over, with the exception of the word *sein*. In the German translations of the English present perfect in the OMC, *sein* was often used in the present perfect even though that is not that common in German at all and thus, the translators might have chosen a different verb form, in these cases the preterite or present, in German instead. When comparing the use of *sein* in the German originals with the ones in the translations, the present perfect form *bin/bist/ist/sind/seid gewesen* seems to be slightly overused in the German translations. In spoken language, the German translations seem to be very straightforward because of the fact that the present perfect is the form most often used in spoken language.

5.3 The German original data

As Rothstein (2008: 23) states, in German, the present perfect is formed by using the auxiliary verb *sein* (“be”) or *haben* (“have”) together with the past participle, such as in the following example 199:

199. Doch **habe** ich weder im Freien noch auch im Aquarium je **gesehen**, daß dieses eindrucksvolle Sich-Androhen zu ernstem Kampfe geführt hätte.
(KOL1)

However, neither in the aquarium nor in the sea **have** I ever **seen** this impressive sparring lead to a serious fight.
(KOL1TE)

Here, the auxiliary verb *haben* is used in the first person singular in combination with the past participle of *sehen* ("see"), which is *gesehen*. It seems to be a very common sentence in which the present perfect is used in the German language. On the one hand, the personal pronoun *ich* ("I") indicates that the utterance is direct speech and on the other hand, a relation to the present point of time is established by expressing that the speaker has never seen the depicted behavior until the present moment. The authors mentioned in the theory part of this paper are of the same opinion that these two aspects seem to be the most striking ones about the present perfect in German. Fabricius-Hansen (2009: 514) states that the perfect is used in most of the cases in German spoken language, while she also expresses that the perfect often is found in situations that have a present time reference (2009: 508).

In order to carry out the research, I included the following German verbs: *bleiben* ("stay"), *denken* ("think"), *finden* ("find"), *gehen* ("go"), *geben* ("give"), *hören* ("hear"), *kommen* ("come"), *machen* ("make"), *nehmen* ("take"), *geschehen* ("happen"), *passieren* ("happen") and *sein* ("be"). The verbs represent the same ones as in the English part of the research and thus, a direct comparison will be possible. To search for them in the corpus, I entered "*habe/hast/hat/haben/habt*", respectively "*bin/bist/ist/sind/seid*", into the search engine and added e.g. "and + 10 *gesehen*", i.e. the past participle form. I searched in the Ge-En-No part of the OMC, in the German originals. The mentioned verbs did not have a lot of hits in the OMC and that is why I also chose to include every 5th hit of the following pattern as well: "*habe/hast/hat/haben/habt*" together with "and + 10 *ge**". A lot of the German past participles are formed by adding "ge-" in the beginning of the word and that is why I expected to find a high number of hits when conducting this search. As it was the case with the English search string "and +3 *ed", also the German hits in this context only cover regular verbs that form their past participle by using "*ge**" in the beginning of it. Additionally, the material found here includes a high number of different verbs and thus, the semantics involved could influence the result. However, I chose to use the hits nevertheless in order

to have a higher number of sentences as a starting point and by doing so, I hope to have included a variety of verbs that make a more general conclusion possible. A total of 534 hits could be found with the pattern “+10 *ge**” and since I used every 5th one, I was left with a total number of 103. The following table illustrates how many hits of every verb are included in my research:

Table 10: German verbs in the present perfect included in the research

German present perfect verb form	Total number of hits	Number of hits included in research
<i>Habe/hast/hat/haben/habt</i> and +10 <i>gedacht</i>	9	7
<i>Habe/hast/hat/haben/habt</i> and +10 <i>gefunden</i>	7	6
<i>Habe/hast/hat/haben/habt</i> and +10 <i>gegeben</i>	9	6
<i>Habe/hast/hat/haben/habt</i> and +10 <i>gehört</i>	11	9
<i>Habe/hast/hat/haben/habt</i> and +10 <i>gemacht</i>	22	18
<i>Habe/hast/hat/haben/habt</i> and +10 <i>genommen</i>	7	6
<i>Habe/hast/hat/haben/habt</i> and +10 <i>ge*</i>	534	103
<i>Bin/bist/ist/sind/seid</i> and +10 <i>passiert</i>	6	6
<i>Bin/bist/ist/sind/seid</i> and +10 <i>geschehen</i>	8	5
<i>Bin/bist/ist/sind/seid</i> and +10 <i>gewesen</i>	28	25
<i>Bin/bist/ist/sind/seid</i> and +10 <i>geblieben</i>	16	16

<i>Bin/bist/ist/sind/seid and +10 gekommen</i>	12	11
<i>Bin/bist/ist/sind/seid and +10 gegangen</i>	8	8
<i>Habe/hast/hat/haben/habt and -3 gedacht</i>	8	6
<i>Habe/hast/hat/haben/habt and -3 gefunden</i>	8	2
<i>Habe/hast/hat/haben/habt and -3 gegeben</i>	10	8
<i>Habe/hast/hat/haben/habt and -3 gehört</i>	10	7
<i>Habe/hast/hat/haben/habt and -3 gemacht</i>	14	8
<i>Habe/hast/hat/haben/habt and -3 genommen</i>	3	2
<i>Habe/hast/hat/haben/habt and -3 ge*</i>	348	55
<i>Bin/bist/ist/sind/seid and -3 passiert</i>	1	1
<i>Bin/bist/ist/sind/seid and -3 geschehen</i>	7	5
<i>Bin/bist/ist/sind/seid and -3 gewesen</i>	14	13
<i>Bin/bist/ist/sind/seid and -3 geblieben</i>	1	1
<i>Bin/bist/ist/sind/seid and -3 gekommen</i>	15	13
<i>Bin/bist/ist/sind/seid and -3 gegangen</i>	7	5
TOTAL	1123	352

Again, it has to be borne in mind that in two of the constructions presented above, namely “*habe/hast/hat/haben/habt and +10 *ge*” and “*habe/hast/hat/haben/habt and -3 *ge*”, not all hits are part of the research but a sample. By choosing a sample in these two cases and all hits appearing in the corpus in the other cases, the results found may be influenced by this choice I made. By using a sample of the hits in the corpus, the hits included might not represent a natural distribution,

but some instances, i.e. specific uses of e.g. the present perfect in combination with a time adverbial, might occur more often or less than others.

5.3.1 Present perfect used in German in order to express relation to the present

When looking at the hits more closely, two different semantic categories can be found. To begin with, there are a number of hits, in total 155, i.e. 44,0%, where the present perfect is used in German because there is a certain relation to the present. Obviously, this distinction was not always clear-cut and in some of the cases, you could argue that the hit might fit into both categories, such as in:

200. Es ist ganz richtig und legitim, daß wir die Sitten, die unsere Eltern uns **gelehrt haben**, als "gut" betrachten, daß wir die sozialen Normen und Riten heilig halten, die uns von der Tradition unserer Kultur überliefert wurden.

(KOL1)

It is perfectly right and legitimate that we should consider as "good" the manners which our parents have taught us, that we should hold sacred the social norms and rites handed down to us by the tradition of our culture.

(KOL1TE)

Example 200 shows clearly that two different interpretations would be possible here. On the one hand, you could say that there is a clear relation to the present because the speakers still know what these good manners are. On the other hand, it would also be possible to state that the parents taught their kids the manners in the past and that teaching is completed at the present point of time. In cases like these, I went for the relation to the present time interpretation because this one seems to capture the meaning of the sentence better and the teaching itself might not be over yet either, since the speakers might still learn new things.

Keeping in mind what has just been said about the difficulties that arise when deciding whether to interpret a sentence as having an impact on the present point of time, here are some examples from the corpus which I put into the category of hits that refer to the present point of time:

201. Michelangelos Pietà, die trauernde Mutter mit dem Leichnam ihres Sohnes, **ist** als Kunstwerk verständlich **geblieben**, als wirkliches Ereignis kaum vorstellbar.

(NE1)

Michelangelo's Pietà, the mourning mother with the body of her son, remains comprehensible as a work of art but hardly imaginable as a real

event. [sic]
(NE1TE)

202. Sie **haben** aber selbst eine neue Heimat **gefunden**[...](RVW1)
But they themselves have found a new homeland, [...](RVW1TE)

203. Ich **habe** davon **gehört**; allerdings weiß ich auch, daß dieses Gesetz, das ein schlafmütziges Parlament verabschiedet hatte, wieder abgeschafft worden ist.
(HME3)

I have heard of it, but I also know that the law, passed by a sleepy Parliament, has been repealed.
(HME3TE)

204. In mehr als vierzig Jahren, die er nach NS-Belasteten sucht, **hat** es nur einen einzigen Fall **gegeben**, in dem ein solcher "Klient" ihm vor Gericht einen Fehler nachzuweisen vermochte: [...](SW1)

In over forty years of searching for Nazi culprits there has only been one case when his "client" was able in court to prove that he had made an error: [...](SW1TE)

205. Noch nie war mir so unbehaglich in dieser Wohnung, dabei **ist** nichts **geschehen**.
(JUB1)

I have never felt so uncomfortable in this apartment; yet nothing has happened.
(JUB1TE)

206. Nur durch Zufall, gleichsam aus Versehen **sind** sie zu ihrem Geld, zu ihrer Villa **gekommen**.
(HME3)

It was, as it were, only by chance, almost by mistake that they acquired their money, their villas.
(HME3TE)

The use of the German present perfect seems to be quite similar to the English one when it comes to relating to the present point of time. In the first example, 201, one of Michelangelo's works is mentioned that still at the present point of time is regarded as a piece of art. Here, the sentence indicates that the fact stated was so in the past, is still so in the present and will most likely be the same in the future as well. Thus, we have a spread from the past, through the present

continuing to the future. In cases like these, it becomes clear that the claims made by D'Alquen (1997: 177), indicating that German does not have a forward spread, are not correct. Thus, Rothstein's approach (2008: 35), including the "perfect time span" theory, seems to be more appropriate since he indicates that a futurate use of the present perfect is possible in German, as it also is in this example.

The next example, number 202, expresses the notion that they found a new home in the past and by using the present perfect it is made clear that the mentioned home is still their home in the present as well. In example 204 the expression *in mehr als vierzig Jahren* ("over the last forty years") indicates that the case stated here was the only one up until the present time, so again a connection to the present is established.

The same patterns also apply to the final three examples, e.g. in example 205. Nothing has ever happened in the apartment mentioned. The use of the present perfect makes it clear that that state was that way in the past and is still the same in the present. As indicated in Fabricius-Hansen's (2009: 508) article in the *Duden*, the present perfect is used here because the event still has an impact on the present.

5.3.2 German present perfect expresses relation to past

The use of the present perfect mentioned above is similar to the one in English. However, when looking at the remaining examples from the corpus search, the present perfect can also be used quite differently in German. The following examples illustrate cases where the present perfect is used in order to relate to past time events that clearly do not seem to have a connection to the present:

207. Ich **habe** sie auf bulgarisch **gehört**, aber ich kenne sie deutsch,
[...](EC1)

I heard them in Bulgarian, but I know them in German; [...](EC1TE)

208. "Als meine Frau noch lebte, **haben** wir viele Ausflüge **gemacht**.
(DW1)

"When my wife was still alive, we often went off on excursions.
(DW1TE)

209. Rückblickend seh ich: Sie **hat** mich ernst **genommen**.
(CW1)

In retrospect I see she took me seriously.
(CW1TE)

210. Jung, jung **sind** wir **gewesen**.
(CW1)

We were young, young.
(CW1TE)

In total, the present perfect is used in this semantic context in 56,0% of the occurrences. In example 207, the second part of the sentence indicates that the speaker talks about a past time event because of the fact that he mentions his youth. The expression *als meine Frau noch lebte* ("when my wife was still alive") in example 208 also expresses that the state introduced, in this case that they went off on excursions, is an event located in the past time. The same pattern applies to example 209. In this example, *rückblickend* ("in retrospect") makes the reader understand that the event happened in the past. In all these cases, the time adverb or the indication when the event took place is not expressed explicitly in the clause itself where the present perfect is used, but when looking at the context it becomes clear that the time being talked about is the past and does not have a lot to do with the present tense.

Finally, the reader or hearer also understands that the last example mentioned above, number 210, mentions a state located in the past. The speaker expressed the idea that they were young in the past and at the same time they are not young now anymore in the present time.

There are several explanations why the present perfect is used in these cases. As mentioned by Fabricius-Hansen (2009: 513), sometimes the relation to the present in connection with the present perfect simply indicates that the event or state is over at the moment of speaking. Another very important aspect in this context is the fact that most examples that include a German present perfect form are direct speech and as mentioned before, the present perfect is the verb form most often used in direct speech.

In total, 223 hits including present perfect verb, i.e. around 63,4%, represent direct speech or stream of consciousness, in which personal pronouns and a first-person-narrator are involved. The high percentage reflects the fact that Germans

preferably use the present perfect in spoken language. This finding corresponds with the statements by Fabricius-Hansen (2009: 514) and Hennig (2000: 180), who also point out that the perfect is used more often than the preterite in German everyday speech.

Moreover, the boundaries between the present perfect and the preterite in German have become fuzzy and it is not always clear when to use which form, as mentioned by Hennig (2000: 29). German native speakers are used to expressing past time events or states with the present perfect and not the preterite verb form and thus, the native reader or hearer might accept either verb form in many cases.

5.3.3 Time adverbials in combination with German present perfect

Finally, there are a small number of hits where a definite time adverbial is used together with a present perfect verb form. As mentioned earlier, this can be seen as a formal category and cannot be compared with the semantic categories mentioned in 5.3.1 and 5.3.2. Here are some of the hits from my corpus material:

211. Sie nahm meine Hand und sagte: "**Gestern ist** es wieder **passiert**."
(JUB1)

She took my hand and said: "Yesterday it happened again."
(JUB1TE)

212. "Warum **sind** Sie **nach dem Krieg** nicht nach Hause **gegangen**?"
wollte ich wissen.
(SW1)

"Why did n't you return home after the war?" I inquired.
(SW1TE)

213. **Ein Jahr später hat** Rolf Sichting **gehört**, daß die Mutter von
Ritschek in Deutschland lebt und daß er selbst sich in ein skandinavisches
Land abgesetzt haben soll.
(SW1)

A year later Rolf Sichting heard that Ritschek's mother was living in
Germany and that he himself was reputed to have gone to a Scandinavian
country.
(SW1TE)

214. **Am Ende des Krieges haben** sie als erste und ohne Aussicht auf
eine gesicherte Zukunft Hand **angelegt**, um wieder einen Stein auf den

anderen zu setzen, die Trümmerfrauen in Berlin und überall.

(RVW1)

After the war, with no prospect of a secure future, women everywhere
were the first to lend a helping hand to set stone upon stone.

They were the "rubble women" in Berlin and everywhere.

(RVW1TE)

The examples above consist of both a present perfect form and a time adverb that clearly indicates a point of time in the past. In example 211 *gestern* ("yesterday") expresses that something happened again the day before and thus, *gestern* indicates a specific point of time. This use of the present perfect here is particularly interesting, since it shows a clear difference between the use of the tenses referring to the past in English and in German. In German, it is possible to use the present perfect in combination with a definite time adverbial, such as *gestern* in this case, in English, however, the use of the present perfect would not be correct here. Thus, as we can see in the translation, the preterite has to be used. *Nach dem Krieg* ("after the war") in sentence 212 also indicates a specific point of time in the past. The same applies to examples 213 and 214. In sentence 213, *ein Jahr später* ("one year later") expresses the exact point of time in the past when the event took place and *am Ende des Krieges* ("after the war") has the same function in sentence 214.

In total, 17 hits of that kind could be found, i.e. approximately 7,5%. As mentioned in the introduction, Fabricius-Hansen (2009: 513) states that the present perfect and the preterite are often interchangeable when being used in combination with a time adverbial. Obviously, the study presented here is too low-scale in order to say anything about the fact whether they are interchangeable and in which type of instances. However, it is interesting to see that the present perfect and the preterite are used so differently in English and in German when it comes to time adverbials. The examples above show that in German the use of the present perfect in combination with a definite time adverbial is possible. This, however, is not the case in English since the preterite would have to be used in examples including e.g. *yesterday*. Thus, this is an interesting difference in the use of the preterite and the present perfect in English and in German.

The results found here show that it is definitely possible to use the specific time adverbials in German with both preterite and present perfect forms. Thus, Fabricius-Hansen seems to make an important point here. Also Rothstein (2008: 76) states the German present perfect can be used in combination with time adverbials indicating specific points of time in the past. Thus, my findings regarding the use of the present perfect and definite time adverbs agree with the statements of both Rothstein and Fabricius-Hansen.

5.3.4 Main clauses in German originals

When considering all forms included here, i.e. also the ones that clearly indicate a sub-clause, such as "*habe/hast/hat/haben/habt* and *-3 gemacht*", in total, 40,1% of the hits represent sub-clauses, while 59,9% are main clauses, such as in:

215. Schon als wir Kinder waren, hatte sie bei jeder Gelegenheit versucht, mich zu stören, mich aus meinem, wie ich es damals **genannt habe**, Geistesparadies zu vertreiben.
(TBE1)

Even when we were children she would try at every opportunity to disturb me, to drive me out of my mental paradise, as I called it.
(TBE1TE)

As mentioned earlier, this cannot be seen as a result in itself since I did not calculate the overall percentage of main clauses in German. However, the number found here seems to be higher than the main clauses found in the English present perfect originals and also higher than German preterite forms, where only 81,4% represent main clauses.

5.3.5 Given or new time in German originals

Just like the English present perfect hits, most German original verb forms indicate a new time rather than old. In total, 90,1% represent new time, while 9,9% express an old time that was mentioned earlier, such as in:

216. (P)
Sie nahm meine Hand und sagte: "**Gestern** ist es wieder passiert."
(P)
[...]
Ich fragte: "Was **ist passiert**?"
(JUB1)

She took my hand and said: "Yesterday it happened again."
(P)

[...]
"What happened?" I asked.
(JUB1TE)

217. Auch in dem Vorhaben, über Jenufa etwas zu schreiben, war ich gescheitert, das war **Ende Oktober**, kurz bevor meine Schwester ins Haus **gekommen ist**, sagte ich mir, jetzt scheitere ich auch an Mendelssohn Bartholdy und ich scheitere sogar jetzt, wo meine Schwester gar nicht mehr da ist.

(TBE1)

I also failed in my plan to write something on Jenufa.
That was in October, not long before my sister came to stay, I told myself.
And now I 'm failing with Mendelssohn Bartholdy, I 'm failing even when my sister is no longer here.

(TBE1TE)

In example 216, it is indicated three sentences earlier when something happened. The *gestern* in the German version, respectively *yesterday* in English, expresses that the event took place the day before. However, the reader cannot find out about this when only looking at the sentence in which the present perfect verb form which was examined appears. In order to find out the exact point of time, several sentences before have to be taken into consideration as well. Quite a few of the hits representing given time are of the same kind as example 217. Since the hit itself occurs in a sub-clause, the exact point of time is given in the clause right before the sub-clause, in this case *Ende Oktober* ("in the end of October").

Finally, most of the sentences represent new time, e.g.:

218. Plötzlich gibt es hier keinen Kaffee mehr zu kaufen."

(P)

Ich stand auf, aber sie sagte, ich brauchte es nicht zu versuchen, es gebe wirklich nirgends Kaffee, auch nicht im Lebensmittellädchen.
Wir schwiegen ein bißchen, es kam mir verständlich vor, daß Namen von Dingen, mit denen sie nie zu tun hatte, ihr nicht sofort zur Stelle waren.

(P)

Ich wartete, bis mir ein entschlossener Augenblick kam, dann sagte ich:
"Auch bei uns in der Stadt **ist gestern** etwas **geschehen**."

(JUB1)

(P)

I got up, but she said I need n't try, there really was no coffee anywhere, not even in the little grocery store.

We sat in silence for a while.

I found it quite understandable that she could n't instantly recall the names of things she never had anything to do with.

(P)

I gathered up my courage and said: "Something happened to us in town too, yesterday."

(JUB1TE)

219. "Und Manieren", hörte er hinter sich die brummige Stimme, "Manieren hast du nicht für fünf Pfennig, sonst hättest du dich wenigstens erst mal vorgestellt."

(P)

Ich heiße Bastian", sagte der Junge, "Bastian Balthasar Bux."

(P)

"Ziemlich kurioser Name", knurrte der Mann, "mit diesen drei B's. Na ja, dafür kannst du nichts, **hast** ihn dir ja nicht selbst **gegeben**."

(ME1)

"My name is Bastian," said the boy.

"Bastian Balthazar Bux."

(P)

"That 's a rather odd name," the man grumbled.

"All those Bs.

Oh well, you ca n't help it.

You did n't choose it.

(ME1TE)

In example 218, the point of time when something happened in town is expressed in the sentence itself *gestern*, "yesterday". The context before does not give any indication about the point of time, but the sentence itself does so. That is why you can say that in this case, a new time is introduced. The same applies to example 219. Here, the addressee's name is mentioned and the fact that he did not choose it himself. When looking at the sentences before, this fact appears in the last sentence for the first time and thus, also in this case a new time is introduced.

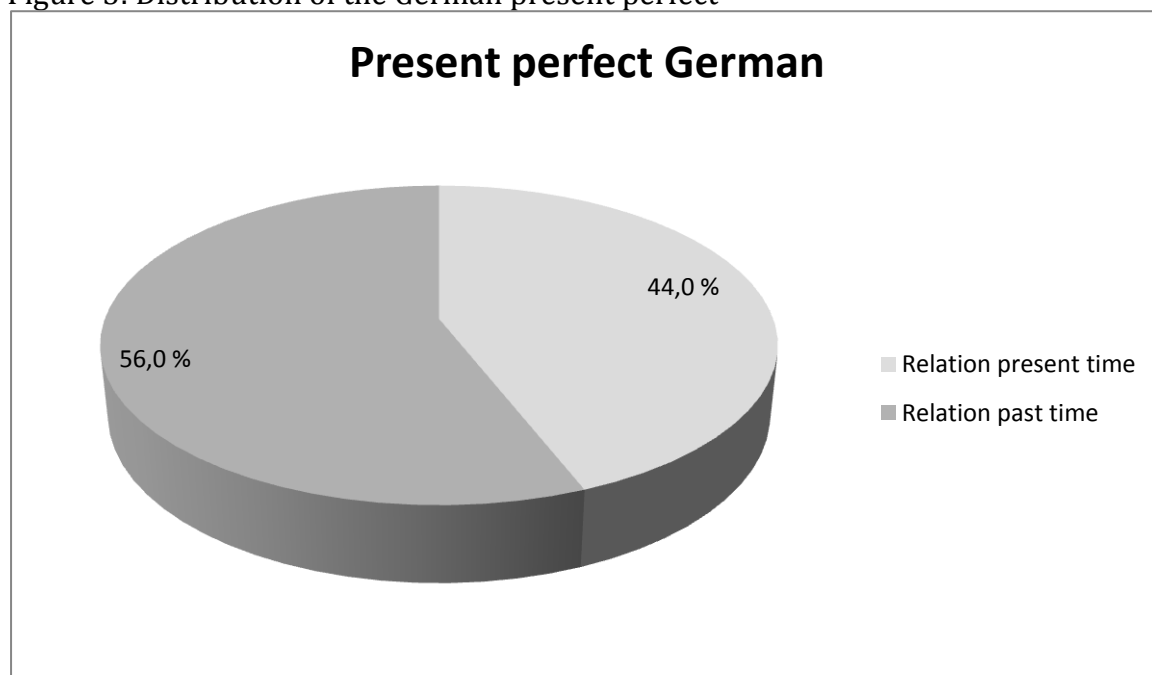
5.3.6 Comparison German and English originals

There are two main semantic categories when the present perfect is used in German, even though it is not always easy to decide in which category the hits regarded belong because semantic distinctions are not always clear-cut. To begin with, the present perfect is often used, just as in English, when referring to events or states that have an impact on the present point of time. However, my results show that there are also a number of instances where the present perfect is used in order to refer to past time situations that are completed in the past. In these cases, English might have chosen the preterite instead of the present perfect. Thus, this can be considered a main difference between the use of the present

perfect in English and in German. In German, these examples often represent direct speech. This is not surprising since German favors the present perfect in direct speech. Again, it has to be borne in mind that in a lot of the sentences found in the corpus are not straightforward and thus, it is not always easy to say whether they have a clear reference to the present time of past time.

Finally, the present perfect can also be found with time adverbials denoting a specific point of time in the past in German, where English would have to use the preterite. This can be considered a striking difference regarding the use of the tenses in English and German since the use of the present perfect would not be possible in English at all in cases including definite time adverbials, such as *yesterday*. The following illustration shows the distribution among the categories.

Figure 3: Distribution of the German present perfect



Concluding, we can say that the use of the present perfect in English and German is sometimes similar when it comes to referring to events or situations that have a clear relation to the present time. However, German also uses the present perfect, preferably in spoken discourse, in order to relate to situations in the past. In English, however, the use of the preterite would be necessary.

In this context, it has to be mentioned that there are also a number of specific time adverbials used in combination with the present perfect in German. In English, only a low number of time adverbials can be found together with a

present perfect forms and none of those denote a specific point of time in the past. These adverbials rather support the relation to the present time, as e.g. *never* or expressions such as *for 10 years*.

5.4 The English translations of the German present perfect verb forms

In this final part of my study, I will have a look at the English translations of the present perfect verb forms in the German original texts from the OMC. The following table gives an overview which tenses were used in English in order to translate the German verb forms.

Table 11: Overall distribution: English translations of the German present perfect forms included in the research

Tense	Number of hits	Percentage
Preterite	199	58,4%
Present perfect	105	30,8%
Present	13	3,8%
Passive	9	2,6%
Past perfect	9	2,6%
Present progressive	5	1,5%
Past progressive	1	0,3%

As mentioned before, both present and past forms of the passive are included in the “passive” category of the English translations.

5.4.1 Preterite used in the English translations

First of all, it is striking that in the case of the German present perfect forms, the preferred tense in the English translations is a different one, namely the preterite, such as in the following example:

220. "Ich habe dich beobachtet", sagte sie schließlich, "du **bist** hinter den Grabstein **gegangen** und hast Futter ausgestreut."
(THH1)

"I watched you," she finally said, "you **went** behind the grave and scattered seed."
(THH1TE)

In the example above, 220, there is a present perfect form in the German original, but in the English translations the translator chose to use the preterite instead. The fact that around 46% of the German originals had a past time reference, might be a decisive aspect when interpreting these results. This assumption will be examined more thoroughly in the following paragraphs.

To begin with, I will present some of the hits that were translated into the preterite in English since this was the most common tense used in the translations in my material:

221. Irgendwann **habe** ich sie an die Hand **genommen** und ins Badezimmer gebracht.
(CF1)

At some point I **took** her by the hand and led her to the bathroom.
(CF1TE)

222. Sechzehn Jahre war ich damals, und ich **habe gedacht**: Wie kommst du hier bloß raus?
(CF1)

I was sixteen when it happened, and I **thought**: how on earth can I escape this?
(CF1TE)

223. Dutzende von Malen bin ich auf einen Stuhl geklettert, ja, eine Stehleiter **habe** ich ins Speisezimmer **geschleppt** — [...]
(KOL1)

Dozens of times I climbed on a chair, and even **carried** a step-ladder into the room — [...]
(KOL1TE)

224. Wie oft und bis zum Überdruß **habe** ich das von der Mutter **gehört**.
(EC1)

How often and ad nauseam **did** I **hear** that from my mother.
(EC1TE)

225. Aber sie **ist** es ja **gewesen** — wie lange hab ich daran nicht gedacht —, die mir den Schlüssel für meinen Traum und für mein Leben in die

Hand gab.

(CW1)

But it **was** she (how long it has been since I thought of that) who handed me the key to my dream and my life.

(CW1TE)

In example 221, *irgendwann* or *at some point* in the English translation, indicates a point of time in the past and that is why the preterite is used here in English. Fabricius-Hansen (2009: 513) states that it is possible to use definite time adverbials in combination with the present perfect in German, however, this is not the case in English. As Greenbaum (1996: 271) states, the preterite is the preferred verb form used in English in these cases. Thus, the translator chose to replace the German present perfect form by the preterite in English. The same pattern also applies to the following sentence, example 222, where also a preterite form is used in the English translation.

The remaining three examples, 223, 224 and 225, all indicate events or states that were completed in the past and this is the reason why the present perfect form in German was translated into a past tense in the English translations. E.g. in 223, the speaker tells what he or she used to do in the past. Here, a regularity is implied by the use of *dutzende von Malen* or *dozens of times* in the English version, and as the results in 5.1 show, there are a number of cases where the past tense is chosen in English in order to express a regularity in the past.

Most of the hits found in my corpus were of the type mentioned above, i.e. the present perfect was used in German to express a past time event. However, when comparing the total number of German present perfect verb forms that have a past relation, in my material 105 examples, with the preterite forms used in the English translations, in this case 134 sentences, it becomes clear that the numbers vary. Thus, there are a number of cases where it does not become entirely obvious whether the reference made in the sentence can be seen as a past time or present relation, such as in:

226. "Nun, ihr **habt** mich **befreit**, mir das Leben gerettet.

(SW1)

"Well, you **liberated** me, you saved my life.

(SW1TE)

227. Die Episode **ist** mir trotzdem von Nutzen **gewesen**; [...]
(PH1)

Nevertheless, the episode **was** useful to me[...]
(PH1TE)

228. "Sag die Wahrheit, Junge", sagte Kwart, "wie **bist** du ins Haus
gekommen?"
(JUB1)

"Tell the truth, boy," said Kwart.
"How **did** you **get** into the house?"
(JUB1TE)

229. "Nein", gab Atréju zu, "ich **habe** ihn noch nie **gehört**."
(ME1)

"No," Atreyu admitted.
"I never **heard** it."
(ME1TE)

In the first examples 226 and 227 you can argue in both directions whether a present time reference is established here or not. In 226, you can either look at the sentence and state that it is completed in the past because the addressee saved the speaker's life in the past or it is also possible to interpret a relation to the present moment here, i.e. that the speaker is still alive and thus, the action had an impact on the present time. Also in example 227 you can say that the episode in the past was useful, on the other hand it might also have an influence on the present since the person might have changed because of the happening. In example 228, a present time relation can be seen when interpreting the sentence in that way that the boy is inside the house at the moment of speaking. Thus, in these cases the translators have chosen to use the preterite form because they were of the opinion that the past time reference was stronger than the present relation. However, as shown above, in these cases both varieties would be possible.

Example number 229 consists of a present perfect form in German and the adverb *nie* ("never"). In English, a preterite form is used here. *Never* might be an indication here for a present time reference, because the speaker did not hear it in the past and he might still not have heard it. In 5.1, the most common adverb

used in combination with the present perfect in English is *never* and thus, this sentence leaves space for discussion whether a present perfect form could have been used in English as well. Also Leech (2004: 37) states that the present perfect is used in combination with the adverb *never* in order to express the indefiniteness involved here. Tottie (2007: 161) mentions, this can also be seen as an indication of the use of American English, where it becomes more and more common to use the adverb *never* with the preterite form. Unfortunately, it is not possible to find out in the corpus whether the translator was of American background or not.

To sum up, there are a number of sentences where it might be possible to use both present perfect and the preterite as well, however, the translators decided to interpret the clauses differently from what I personally would have chosen in the first place, i.e. with a past time relation.

5.4.2 Present perfect used in English translations

Moving on, the second most common way of translating the German present perfect is choosing the same form, i.e. the present perfect, in English as well. Here are some hits from the corpus material that were translated in that way:

230. Von den Märchen, die ich hörte, **sind** mir nur die über Werwölfe und Vampire in Erinnerung **geblieben**.

(EC1)

Of the fairy tales I heard, only the ones about werewolves and vampires **have lodged** in my memory.

(EC1TE)

231. Darum **sind** wir **gekommen**."

(ME1)

That 's why we **'ve come**."

(ME1TE)

232. "Was **ist** euch denn **passiert**?" erkundigte sich Atréju.

(ME1)

"What **has happened** to you?" Atreyu asked.

(ME1TE)

233. Die Karten — nicht nur die speziellen des Tarock — **sind** für mich von klein auf ein Inbegriff von "Land" **gewesen**: [...]

(PH1)

Ever since I was a child, playing cards — and not only the special tarok cards — **have** for me **epitomized** "country." [...]
(PH1TE)

234. "Wir **haben** von dir **gehört**", ächzte der mit der durchlöchernten Brust, "und man hat uns erzählt, weshalb du unterwegs bist."
(ME1)
"We '**ve heard** about you," moaned the one with the hole in his chest.
"And we 've been told about your Quest."
(ME1TE)

235. Immer **hat** dieser Mensch mich für eine Zauberin **gehalten**.
(CW1)
The man **has** always **taken** me for a witch.
(CW1TE)

236. *Der Fortschritt **ist** noch nicht zu uns **gekommen**.*
(ERH1)
*Progress **has** not yet **reached** us.*
(ERH1TE)

In example 230, there is a clear relation to the present, because the speaker still remembers the fairytales at the moment of speaking. The relation to the present, which is established here, explains why the present perfect is also used in the English translation. 231, e.g., represents a sentence where the connection to the present is physically visible. The speakers came in the past and thus, they are still at the same place at the moment of speaking. In example 234 a relation to the present time is expressed since the speaker heard about the addressee already before the conversation. Thus, he heard about him or her in the past and he still knows what was said about him or her in the present moment. The sentences presented here clearly establish a connection between the past and the point of speaking.

Several authors, such as Greenbaum (1996: 270) or Hasselgård et.al. (2007: 184), express in their works that the present perfect is typically used in instances like these in English. That is why it does not seem to be surprising that the translators chose to use the present perfect form here in their translations of the German present perfect tenses. Finally, in the last sentence, 236, the adverb *yet* is

involved, which can indicate present time reference, as mentioned by Hasselgård et.al. (2007: 185) and so, also in this example, the present perfect verb form is translated into a present perfect verb form in English as well.

5.4.3 Present used in English translations

The third largest category of the English translations represents present tenses, such as in:

237. Groß **ist** er **gewesen** und kräftig, von gewinnendem Äußeren.

(ERH1)

He **is** tall and strong, good-looking.

(ERH1TE)

238. [...] ich selber komme in diesem Bild nicht vor, wohl aber **sind** mir Geschichten über Schlangen in Erinnerung **geblieben**, die der Vater damals erzählte.

(EC1)

[...]; I myself do not appear in this picture, but I **remember** stories my father told me about serpents.

(EC1TE)

Also in this category, the sentences in the German original versions have a present time relation. In 237, the person that the speaker talks about is still tall at the moment of speaking. Thus, the choice of the present tense in English draws the focus to the fact that the person is tall at the present time. The same applies to example 238. By using the present tense in this case, the translator shifts the reader's or hearer's attention to the fact that the speaker or writer still remembers the stories told by his or her father. Additionally, it is striking that in this case, the sentence was re-written drastically and thus, it does not come as a surprise that the tense used here was changed as well.

5.4.4 Remaining hits and their English translations

Finally, a rather low number of passive, past perfect and present progressive forms could be found in my material, in total about 4,2%. To begin with, there was one instance where a present progressive form was used in the English translation:

239. Vielleicht ist das der Grund des unbegreiflichen Unglücks, das über Phantásien **gekommen ist**.

(ME1)

Maybe that 's the cause of this mysterious calamity that 's **threatening** all Fantastica.

(ME1TE)

In sentence 239, the German original expresses a present time relevance, i.e. the calamity is still threatening Fantastica. According to Biber et. al. (1999: 460) “the progressive aspect designates an event or state of affairs which is in progress, or continuing, at the time indicated by the rest of the verb phrase”. Thus, the present is used in this case to express the relation to the present time, as it is presented in the German original version, and the progressive aspect simply makes it clear that the state is still going on.

A total of three German present perfect hits were translated into the past perfect in English, as in:

240. Die Frage nach dem Arterhaltungswert des Kämpfens **hat** bekanntlich schon Darwin selbst **gestellt** und auch schon eine einleuchtende Antwort gegeben: [...](KOL1)

Darwin **had** already **raised** the question of the survival value of fighting, and he has given us an enlightening answer: [...](KOL1TE)

The German sentence expresses a past tense relation in 240 since Darwin raised the question in the past. Thus, it is not surprising that a past tense is used in the English translation here. The fact that the past perfect appears in this case can be explained by the fact that two events that took place in the past are mentioned here. First, the question that Darwin raised and secondly, the answer that he gave to his question. In order to place the two events on a time scale, the past perfect is used for the first one, the question asked, to indicate that this happened before he gave the answer.

Finally, there are five instances where the German present perfect form was translated into a passive form in English. In these cases, there does not seem to be a specific reason for the construction chosen, but it rather indicates that the translator used a completely different expression than the one in the German version:

241. Mit mir **haben** sie das auch oft gemacht.

(CF1)

This **was done** to me quite often.

(CF1TE)

Here, in example 241, the passive construction used in the English translation was chosen because a word by word translation would not have been as idiomatic in English. Instead of saying *They have done this to me quite often*, the translator decided to use a passive construction in English instead. Thus, in these cases, the translators seem to have chosen a completely different construction than the one in the original and this is a typical case of re-writing the sentence entirely in order to make it sound as idiomatic as possible.

5.4.5 Conclusion and comparison of the translations

When comparing the English translation of the German originals and the German translations of the English originals of the present perfect it is striking that most of the hits in the case of the English translations, almost 60% were translated into a different form than the one used in the originals, i.e. the preterite. These were followed by around 30% of the English translations that represent the present perfect in English as well. The hits where the translators chose the preterite instead of the present perfect represent hits referring to past time situations and in these cases, English uses the preterite, while German, especially in spoken language, can also express the meaning with a present perfect form.

In the German translations of the English present perfect forms, the present perfect was the form used in the majority of the cases, followed by the present tense, which also makes the relation to the present time clear. A small number though, i.e. about 8%, were translated into the preterite. Out of these, a lot of the occurrences include the verb *sein*, which normally is not used in the present perfect in German and thus, a different form has to be chosen in the translations.

A lot of the sentences in the translations were also re-written drastically and thus, the verb form used in the original version was often replaced by a different one in the target language.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Chapter 6 presents the conclusion of my investigation. To begin with, I will discuss some considerations that I faced during my research because of the way samples were selected or due to the structure of the OMC. In the main part of Chapter 6, I will show the main findings of my research and also look at them in the light of earlier researches done by various authors. Finally, I will present some possible further investigations around the topic of my paper.

6.1 Considerations during the research

To begin with, there were several issues that I had to deal with during the research and writing process. Those considerations involved both the composition of the OMC and the way the samples were collected.

First of all, I had to make a choice about how to collect the samples from the OMC. In a lot of the cases, especially the ones involving the original preterite forms in both German and English, a lot of hits could be found for each of the verbs that I had picked for my research. That is why it was necessary to pick random samples in some of the cases, e.g. in the case of the preterite verb form *thought*, which has a total of 442 hits. Since the OMC does not have a function to produce random samples, these samples had to be collected manually. In the end, I wanted to have about 100 hits of each verb, i.e. in the case of *thought* e.g. I picked every 4th example.

This way of collecting the samples obviously leads to variations among the hits included in the research. In some of the cases, every 2nd example was chosen, in others every 4th and sometimes all hits found in the OMC were included in the research. Thus, the results vary slightly and the way the samples were collected has to be kept in mind when reading the results since the verbs where all hits were included might show more representative results than the samples. Nevertheless, I picked the examples in the way I did because it still seems to be the most appropriate solution in order to include a wide range of semantics instead of using only a couple of verbs and looking at all hits of those verbs. Additionally, progressive forms, subjunctives and passive constructions were treated like a different category and thus, they were not included in this

investigation. These aspects have to be borne in mind when reading the results presented in this research paper.

Moving on, it is not possible to look at fiction and non-fiction separately in this part of the OMC. Regarding some of the research questions, e.g. the use of the present perfect in German, it would have been useful to be able to look at fiction on the one hand and non-fiction on the other hand. However, the fact that the majority of the texts included in the En-Ge-No and Ge-En-No part of the OMC represent fiction does not make this issue too problematic for the research.

In a lot of the cases, the sentences were re-written drastically in the translations and thus, it is not surprising that the tense used often was changed in these cases as well. Mostly, this was done in order to make the sentences sound more idiomatic in the target language.

Finally, the semantic categories presented in my paper are vague in some cases and the decision whether to put an example in one or the other category is sometimes arbitrary and debatable. When dealing with semantic issues, it is often possible to interpret the sentences given in various ways and thus, not all occurrences are completely straightforward. This aspect also has to be acknowledged with regard to the interpretation of the results presented in this paper.

6.2 Results found in my research

In this part of the conclusion, I will present the main findings from my research in the OMC. Additionally, the results found here will be compared with earlier researches and papers written by other authors.

6.2.1 The preterite

I had a look at a total of 888 English original preterite verb forms and their German translations and 1099 German originals and their English translations. In both English and German, I could find three main semantic categories for the preterite hits found, namely sentences indicating regularity, sequences or single events. Additionally, I also had a look at specific time adverbials used in combination with the preterite in both English and German. This can be depicted as a formal category and is not directly comparable with the three semantic

categories. As mentioned in 6.1, the hits that are placed in the various semantic categories chosen here are vague in some cases and this has to be kept in mind when reading the results given in this paper.

Both in English and in German, the majority of the preterite hits from my research can be placed into the single event category. In German, 69,9% fall into this category and in English a total of 61,7%. Looking at the sequence category, it is the second most common one in both languages. In total, 35,4% of the English indicate a sequence and 25,6% of the German hits do the same. There is only a low number of verb forms, i.e. 2,9% in English and 4,5% in German, that express repeated events in the past. Finally, the formal category of time adverbials used together with the preterite can also be found in my results. In 10,1% of the cases there is a time adverbial in the English instances and in German in 9,3% of all hits taken into consideration. The results mentioned here show that German and English behave to some extent similarly regarding the use of the preterite.

The categories chosen represent some main aspects of the preterite that various other authors focused upon earlier. Most authors claim that the preterite can refer to situations that happened before the present moment. These statements are closely related to my single event category. In that category, verb forms are included that indicate single events or states that were completed before the point of speaking. D'Alquen (1997: 143) and Fabricius-Hansen (2009: 511) state that German also uses the preterite verb form in order to express situations that took place before the present time. Additionally, Fabricius-Hansen (2009: 511) mentions that the preterite can also refer to repeated events in the past in German. This aspect of the preterite use can be found in my regularity category.

One main part of the preterite in both German and English is its use when indicating sequences. Leech (2004: 14) has made the same claim regarding the English language before and Fabricius-Hansen (2009: 513) did so concerning the German language.

Finally, it has been stated before, e.g. by Fabricius-Hansen (2009: 513) and Rothstein (2008: 74) with regard to the German language, and e.g. by Greenbaum (1996: 271) and Biber et.al. (1999: 467) about the English preterite, that specific

time adverbials are often used in combination with the preterite in order to indicate when exactly the situation took place in the past. Thus, my findings correspond with the results of the authors mentioned above with regard to the three semantic categories and the formal one including time adverbials.

Moving on, in both the English and the German translations of the original preterite forms, the preterite was the favored verb form used in the translations. In the German translations of the English preterite, a total of 86,3% were translated in the preterite and in the English translations of the German originals, 91,8%. In the German translations, the present perfect replaced the original preterite forms in 7,7% of the cases. This mainly has to do with the fact that these sentences include direct speech where the present perfect is more common in German (Fabricius-Hansen, 2009: 514). The remaining hits of the English original preterite forms were translated into passive constructions, subjunctives, present tense verb forms and past perfect verb forms in German.

In English, only a very small number of the German original preterite forms was translated into something else than the preterite. 3,4% of the cases were translated into a past progressive verb form. This form expresses also a clear connection to the past, however, it does not exist in German and thus, the preterite was used in the German originals. The remaining few percentages of the English translations consist of past perfect verb forms, *-ing* clauses, passive constructions, present tense verb forms, future expressions and only very few present perfect verb forms. As mentioned earlier, the sentences were often re-written in these cases and thus, the verb form used was replaced by a different one.

Concluding, we can say that the numbers here show that in both the English and German translations the preterite was by far the most common verb form used. The main exception are cases including direct speech, where the present perfect is chosen in the German translations of the English preterite forms.

6.2.2 The present perfect

In the following, I will sum up the main results of the present perfect use and its translations. I looked at a total of 354 original present perfect hits in English and

352 hits in German. The main characteristic of the English present perfect according to my results is that a connection to the present point of time is established. This aspect could be found in all sentences included in my research. Various authors, e.g. Greenbaum (1996: 270), Biber et.al. (1999: 467) and Hasselgård et.al. (2007: 184), have mentioned earlier that this is an important aspect when considering the English present perfect use.

Additionally, a number of time adverbials could be found in combination with the present perfect in English. In total 19,2% of the hits include a time adverbial, with *never* being the most common one. The fact that the present perfect is used together with time adverbials was pointed out by e.g. Greenbaum (1996: 270) and Leech (2004: 44ff.) as well. Thus, my findings correspond with their statements regarding the present perfect use in English.

Finally, my results show that there is a forward spread, i.e. the situations often begin in the past, continue in the present time and might even do so in the future. These findings go against Rothstein's (2008: 29) opinions that the English present perfect has no futurate use, but they support Leech's (2004: 36ff.) statements regarding this issue, who concludes that the present perfect can continue in the future as well.

The German present perfect results are quite different from the English ones. First of all, there are also instances where the sentences express an impact on the present point of time. 44,0% of the hits from the OMC are of that kind. This aspect of the German present perfect has also been pointed out by e.g. Fabricius-Hansen (2009: 513).

The remaining ones, i.e. 56,0%, refer to a past time event. This is a very interesting difference between the use of the present perfect in English and in German since English would have to use the preterite here, German, however, can use either verb form. The fact that German can use the present perfect here as well has to a certain extent to do with the fact that the present perfect is the verb form most commonly used in spoken German according to Fabricius-Hansen (2009: 514) and Hennig (2000:180). In direct discourse, the preterite is only used when it comes to a small number of verbs, e.g. *sein* ("to be") according to

Gersbach (1982: 84) and Fabricius-Hansen (2009: 514). About 63,4% of all hits including a German present perfect form can be described as direct speech or inner monologue. Thus, it does not come as a surprise that the present perfect in the German originals also refers to past time situations in my results.

It is very interesting to see that time adverbials indicating a specific point of time in the past, such as *gestern* ("yesterday"), could be found in 7,5% of all the German present perfect hits. Fabricius-Hansen (2009: 513) states that the preterite and the present perfect are often interchangeable in German when it comes to specific time adverbials and Rothstein (2008: 76) made the same point. However, this specific use of the present perfect in combination with definite time adverbials is special for the German language and it would not be possible in English because the preterite would have to be used instead.

Finally, my results show that the present perfect in German has a forward spread, just as the English use of the verb form. This corresponds with Rothstein's (2008: 31ff.) statements about the present perfect, but not with d'Alquen's (1997: 177) who is of the opinion that the German present perfect does not have a futurate use.

To sum up, both English and German use the present perfect when referring to situations that have an impact on the present point of time. In both languages, time adverbials can be found in combination with the present perfect verb form and there is a forward spread in both English and German. There are two main differences here though. First of all, German also uses the present perfect to refer to clear past time event, especially in spoken discourse where the present perfect is the form predominantly used. Additionally, we can find definite time adverbials in combination with the present perfect in German, where the preterite would have to be chosen in English.

There are 348 German translations of the English present perfect included in my paper and 341 English translations of the German original verb forms. In the case of the German translations, the majority, i.e. 73,3% of all the hits, were translated into the present perfect in German as well. Additionally, in 13,8% a present tense verb form was used in the German translation. This verb form choice also

indicates that there is a connection to the present. An interesting finding in this context is the way of translating the English originals of the verb *be*. As mentioned before, it is not common to use German *sein* in the present perfect. However, 46,5% of the hits of *was/were* were translated into the present perfect in German. This might be an indication of a slight overuse of this verb form in the German translations. The remaining percentages of *was/were* were mainly translated into the present or preterite in order to avoid the present perfect in German.

One of the major findings of my investigation regards the the English translations of the original German present perfect forms. Here, it is striking that the favored verb form used in the translations is a different one, namely the preterite and not the present perfect that was used in the German originals. It can be found in 58,4% of the instances, i.e. in the majority of the translations. This high percentage can be explained by the fact that a lot of the original German hits have a past time reference and thus, the present perfect has to be replaced by the preterite in English. 30,8% of the hits were translated into the present perfect in English as well, followed by 3,8% where a present tense verb form was used. The present tense verb forms also establish a connection to the present point of time and thus, it is not surprising that it was chosen as a translation in a number of cases. Finally, as mentioned before, some sentences were also re-written and thus, also the tense used was replaced by a different one.

6.3 Outlook and further research

There are several areas and aspects mentioned in this paper that leave the possibility for further research. To begin with, it would be possible to write a more thorough paper, which includes all hits from the various verbs included and not only a sample. However, this was not possible with regard to the given length of my research. By including all hits, the result would be easier to compare since you are not faced with the fact that in some cases only samples are presented and in others all hits found in the OMC.

Moving on, it would be possible to look at fiction and non-fiction separately. At this stage, this is not possible with parts of the OMC, but nevertheless it would be interesting to see to what extent the preterite and the present perfect use vary in both English and German fiction and non-fiction. One issue here that could be

examined more thoroughly is the question whether the German present perfect is used a lot more often in fiction than in non-fiction because of the fact that it is very common in German speech. The same applies to the German translations of the English original present perfect forms.

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